

Mary Seacole Speech

I am Mary Seacole. I have been forgotten because I am black and because I am a woman and because I lived 200 years ago when there was still slavery in the British Empire and people thought I was worthless, even though I was no slave but a free woman.

But you will not forget me now, will you?

Not when I tell you my story, of who I am and what I have done.

I am a healer

Do you know that ginger, the root of a plant, has the power to heal an upset stomach and that aloe vera, the leaves of a plant, can help heal cuts in the skin. I learnt this and more from my mother in Jamaica who knew that plants had the power to heal the body, mind and soul.

I am a nurse

In 1855 I started up the 'British hotel' to help dying and wounded soldiers on the battlefield in the Crimean War near Russia when everyone told me I couldn't. Officers in the British Army told me I couldn't help out there because I was a woman. Florence Nightingale told me I couldn't help her because I was.... I'll let you answer that one. But I used my own money to set up my own hospital and help those in need, dying from cholera, malaria and all manner of sicknesses of the body and the mind. My father, a Scottish Army Officer always told me, "Mary, you are a doctress."

I am a mother

My soldiers are 'my sons' and I am their 'mother.' I do all I can to help and expect no reward. Remember me this way and remember, do not judge a woman on how they look, or where they were born, but on their deeds.

I am Mary Seacole.