

topsail haul, fore bowline there some of yer, and round she goes cheerily all hands and the cook. Pon my soul old chap I hope you'll forgive me but I find myself envying you your release from this blarsted English weather and sodden system we seem to be chained to hand and foot. . . . God bless you old fellow. I looks t'wards yer, takes off my 'at and bows. Remember me special to the Mrs not forgetting the quiver full, and don't altogether forget yours truly when you reach the region where the dolphins dance and play and the whales and the sharks kick up their bleedin larks ten thousand miles away. Ever of thee, Jas Sexton. P.S. Convey to the Democracy of the New Country the fact that soon we shall see the flood gates of the Democracies (in fact we have seen it) walking hand in hand with the (khaki) British Lion determined to gather the seed sown in the plank of progress which is now ripe for plucking throughout the length and breadth of the land so richly and plentifully endowed with everything necessary to promote the interest and the welfare of her people from an unnatural extinction in the land of their inheritance. This peroration is patented is reversable is warrented not to shrink and to stand any climate. You have however, the patentee's permission to use it on the Colony and the Colonists who are in the spirit of adventure going to seek fresh fields and pastures new. And if they survive then there is no fear of them in the land they're going to. J.S.

Dear old Will, By this time you will be "on the ocean blue", and, I make no doubt, "your saucy ship's a beauty". This letter, which reaches you per special arrangement with a friendly Mahatma, comes hoping that all is well with you and yours, and that you will have "a fair sea and a prosperous voyage." There is a delightful overture of Mendelssohn's of this name, by the way. Had I an Aeolian and the necessary perforated roll I would sit me down and play it *con amore* in your honour.

Shall we ever see each other again dear friend? I wonder. Shall we ever swap ideas and stories and eat pancakes and take rides and walks together again? I wonder. Sit up and smoke the peaceful swaggerette (as my Seaforth Highlander would call it) and see the ruby kindly in the wine-glass? I wonder. Are the brave days of old never to be repeated?

But, dear Will, the pleasures of Retrospection are not to be sneezed at. We've had bully times together, and those even the high gods cannot take away. Dear old Tilston! How happy I was to be there! With the books and the boys and Bessie – how alliteratively truthful we are – and your dear wife – God bless her! – and your spiffing old self.

I'm writing in a bad light, but the room is illuminated with bright memories. I hear the "Rolly Jobbers" again and the chirp of birds in the garden outside Inveresk. 'Twas a brave, brave time, and I feel a choke in the throat when I think that it is gone for aye.

I'll e'en go out and drink a glass of summat, for we must away with melancholy. And so, *auf wiedersehen* and goodnight. With love to Meg and all the family, Your loving friend, Harry.

The last letter was not originally part of the 'Sutcliffe's Ocean Postage' packet. It is given here without comment since no comment could be as eloquent or poignant as the letter itself.

My dear Ranstead, This is the scheme that failed. I brought the letters to London and then intended to hand them to the Steward direct. When I found I could not stay until you sailed I sent them by Parcel Post from Finsbury at noon on Thurs. the 16th. I felt sure they would be in plenty of time.

I am nearly heartbroken about it and I have not told any of the contributors, and you will have to take the will for the deed. I have not the heart to open the parcel again and therefore send it just as it was intended for you. Kindest regards to you all, Yours faithfully, J. D. Sutcliffe.