

# **A LAME DOG'S DIARY**

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A Lame Dog's Diary by S. Macnaughtan

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**S. MACNAUGHTAN**

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DOG'S DIARY**



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# A LAME DOG'S DIARY


By S. Macnaughtan, Author of  
'Selah Harrison,' 'The Fortune  
of Christina Macnab,' 'The Gift,'  
etc.



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*TO*  
*LADY ELLESMERE*



the Fern Cottage furniture was removed in a van to Fairview, as the new house is called—the handsomer pieces placed upon the outside of the van, and the commoner and least creditable of the bedroom furniture within. Everyone was at his or her window on the day that the Miss Traceys' furniture, with the best cabinet and the inlaid card-table duly displayed, was driven in state by the driver of the station omnibus through the town. A rumour got abroad that even more beautiful things were concealed from view inside the van, and the Miss Traceys satisfied their consciences by saying: 'We did not spread the rumour and we shall not contradict it.'

But the mystery concerns the furniture in quite a secondary sort of way, and it is only important as being the means of giving rise to the much discussed rumour in the town. For mark, the drawing-room furniture was taken at once and stored in a spare bedroom, and the drawing-room was left unfurnished. This fact might have remained in obscurity, for in winter time at least, it is not unusual for ladies to receive guests in the dining-room, with an apology for the drawing-room being a cold sitting-room during the frost. But Mrs. Lovekin, the lady who acts as co-hostess at every entertainment in our neighbourhood, handing about her friends' cakes and tea, and taking, we are inclined to think, too much upon herself, did, in a moment of expansion, offer to show the Traceys' house to the Blinds who happened to call there on the day when she was paying her respects to Miss Tracey. Mrs. Lovekin always removes her

bonnet and cloak in every house, and this helps the suggestion that she is in some sort a hostess everywhere.

Palestrina, who was also calling on the Miss Traceys, gave me a full, true, and particular account of the affair the same evening.

'Mind the wet paint,' Mrs. Lovekin called from the dining-room window to the Miss Blinds as they came in at the gate, 'and I'll open the door,' she remarked, as she sailed out into the passage to greet the sisters. Miss Ruby Tracey would rather have done this politeness herself, in order that she might hear the flattering remarks which people were wont to make about the hall paper. It is so well known that she and her sister keep three servants that they never have any hesitation in going to the door themselves. Whereas the Miss Blinds, who have only one domestic, would seem hardly to know where their front door is situated.

'What an elegant paper!' exclaimed Miss Lydia Blind, stopping awestruck in the little hall. Miss Lydia would, one knows, have something kind to say if she went to pay a call at a Kaffir hut.

'Yes,' said Mrs. Lovekin, in a proprietary sort of way; 'it is one of Moseley's which Smithson got down in his book of patterns. The blue paint is what they call "eggshell"—quite a new shade. Come this way and have a cup of tea.'

'I am sure it is all very simple,' said Miss Tracey, in a disparaging manner that showed her good breeding, as they sat down in the dining-room. 'How do you like the new carpet, Miss Belinda?'

'Glory, glory, glory!' said Miss Belinda; 'glory, glory, glory!'

'Show Miss Lydia the new footstools, Ruby dear,' said Miss Tracey, 'I am sure she would like to see them.' For we all believe—or like to believe—that to praise our property must be Miss Lydia's highest pleasure.

Mrs. Lovekin seized the opportunity to act as tea-maker to the party. She poured cream and sugar into the cups, with the remark that there was no one in Stowel whose tastes in these respects she did not know, and she handed a plate of cake to Miss Belinda, saying:

'There, my dear, you sit comfortable and eat that.'

'Glory, glory, glory!' said Miss Belinda.

The Miss Traceys had tea dispensed to them by the same hand, and accepted it with that slight sense of bewilderment which Mrs. Lovekin sometimes makes us feel when she looks after us in our own houses, and Miss Lydia Blind distributed her thanks equally between her and the Miss Traceys.

Nothing was talked of that afternoon but the new house—its sunny aspect and its roomy cupboards in particular commanding the heartiest commendation. Presently the ladies were taken to see all over it, with the exception of one of the spare bedrooms and the drawing-room. They knew these rooms existed, because Miss Tracey paused at the door of each, and said lightly, 'This is the drawing-room,' and 'This is another spare bedroom,' and although, as my sister confided to me, they would have given much to see