

**A PRINCE OF GOOD
FELLOWS: A
PICTURE FROM LIFE**

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A Prince of Good Fellows: A Picture from Life by Samuel Humphreys James & N. Warrington Crabtrie

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SAMUEL HUMPHREYS JAMES & N. WARRINGTON CRABTRIE

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A PICTURE FROM LIFE

WRITTEN BY THE AUTHOR OF
"A WOMAN OF NEW ORLEANS"

AND EDITED BY
N. WARRINGTON CRABTRIE

NEW YORK:
TRADE SUPPLIED BY
THE AMERICAN NEWS CO.

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BY
SAM H. JAMES.

MA

TO
LEE RICHARDSON, JR.,
OF VICKSBURG, MISS.
A VERITABLE PRINCE OF GOOD FELLOWS,
THIS BOOK IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED.

the plain truth, I should feel much concerned if I thought they would. But there is a large proportion of men and women of sense and education in this world who like truthful work, and I doubt not they may find something to interest them for a few hours in these pages; it is into their hands I place my cause, knowing that they will give me full justice. I have not called the book a novel, but "A Picture from Life," though it is largely a work of fiction.

After a man has spent a whole year of the best period of his life in careful work on a book, and eight more months in having it corrected, he does not feel like offering any apology in presenting it to the public. The manuscript has been read by three able critics—by Prof. Schele de Vere, the Senior Professor of the University of Virginia; by Dr. William Holcombe, of New Orleans, and by Dr. T. C. Coan, of the New York Bureau of Criticism. The Senior Professor of the University of Virginia devoted one week to correcting the manuscript, and all suggestions offered by the other gentlemen have been made by the writer. A friend, a lady of culture and education, has read the MS. twice and made such corrections as she saw fit, and, in addition to this, the writer has gone over the manuscript five times, so, if it is not correct, it is not for want of enough correcting. I doubt if any first born baby, born within a year, has had half the nursing that the MS. of this book has undergone.

After the first few chapters, I allow N. Warrington Crabtrie to take the story in hand, and to tell it in his own way of talking, after having lived twenty years among "free niggers" and cotton planters. The critics need not tell me that Crabtrie is not using elegant English, for I have spent months in gathering together all the odd provincial sayings of this section, and have allowed Crabtrie to use them, so as to give as much "local color" to the story as possible. Twenty years ago, when Crabtrie came home from Harvard, he would have used as elegant English as a Boston critic, but after twenty years' intercourse with negroes and cotton planters his English has become corrupted to a large extent, and I have attempted nothing more than a truthful portrayal of his speech.

It is necessary to make a few remarks in regard to the characters in the book, since in "A Woman of New Orleans" the characters were taken from life, a fact which caused no little trouble. To save all such trouble here, we shall state exactly the truth in regard to the characters in the present book. General Lane, Ethel, Major Rankin and wife and his three daughters, are all products of the author's imagination.

Grandma Gray resembles, in one or two things, a dear old lady who is still with us, but she is mainly a creation of fiction. Dr. Brandon, Mrs. Brewster and her daughter, Howard Sayer and Crabtrie are all taken from life, with a few additions given to them by the imagination of the writer. Little Dan Selden (who is the true hero of the story, as Brandon is the quasi one,) is very much like a little fellow I once loved and lost—long, long ago—before the stars fell. I have an idea that I shall find him again, together with all the good things I could not have in this world, over in the better country. The character which will puzzle the reader (of this section) most, is old John Selden. A half-dozen people will be picked out for this gentleman, but in each case the reader will be mistaken. That gentleman is the product of the author's imagination *alone*. The character was suggested by an incident told the author years ago by one living in another State. Jim Longley and his wife were suggested by the same incident. There is no cause for giving any offense in the book; the characters taken from life are all dead save Crabtrie, and when he hears that he has been so carefully written up, his delight will be unbounded, and he will do more in advertising the book than all the papers put together. Below we give the views of three critics in regard to the book:

Prof. Schele de Vere, Senior Professor of the University of Virginia says: "As a picture of life at Mound Station, the book has great merit."

Dr. William Holcombe, of New Orleans, says: "You have woven a very pleasant, interesting story; pleasant and interesting because it is *true to nature*. This book is *much superior* to your first publication."

Dr. T. C. Coan, of the New York Bureau of Criticism, says: "The story has vividness, life, and some humor, and has interest as the record of a grotesque social life."