

**VANDOVER AND
THE BRUTE. [1914]**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649728442

Vandover and the Brute. [1914] by Frank Norris & Charles G. Norris

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

FRANK NORRIS & CHARLES G. NORRIS

**VANDOVER AND
THE BRUTE. [1914]**

VANDOVER AND THE BRUTE

BY
FRANK NORRIS
//



DOUBLEDAY, PAGE & COMPANY
GARDEN CITY NEW YORK

1914

Es

FOREWORD

The following novel was completed by Frank Norris in 1895. It was written almost simultaneously with "McTeague," although the latter book was conceived and actually begun at an earlier date, and finished fully two years later. His third novel, "Moran of the Lady Letty," appeared first in book form in September, 1898; "McTeague" followed in six months; two more were published within the next year. There seemed no room at the time for "Vandover and the Brute." It was destined to have a curious history.

Shortly after Frank Norris' death certain publishers, learning of the existence of a completed novel from his pen, desired to publish it. The manuscript — no copy of which had ever been made — had been packed away in a crate, and was in storage in a large warehouse in San Francisco. It was impossible to determine in which crate among many others the manuscript had been placed. While the question of opening these crates one by one was being discussed, the earthquake and fire occurred; the warehouse burned to the ground, and it was assumed that its contents were consumed with it. A little over a year ago a letter was received from the storage company stating that certain furniture and boxes had been moved away from the warehouse just before the building caught

fire. These had been transferred to a safer place and when a readjustment took place, it was discovered that a few of the crates had not been properly labelled and the contents of one or two of them failed to identify the owner. The manuscript of "Vandover and the Brute" was found, but it so happened that the signature of the title sheet had been cut out for the sake of the autograph. The matter remained unsettled for seven years until a junior member of the firm one day began to read the manuscript, recognized its author's style at once, and a complete identification resulted.

The greater parts of "Vandover and the Brute" and "McTeague" were written in the years of 1894 and 1895. It was at this period of Frank Norris' life that his career began to shape itself. In 1894 he completed his four years' course at the University of California and came East to take post-graduate work in the English department of Harvard University under the instruction of Prof. L. E. Gates. This was undoubtedly the most formative year of his life. That he appreciated this fact at the time is shown by his dedication of "McTeague" to Professor Gates. As far as I am able to determine, "McTeague" was begun and the bulk of it was written before he left California. While he was at Cambridge he commenced "Vandover and the Brute," which he completed after his return to San Francisco.

The earlier chapters of "Vandover and the Brute" bear evidence to the Harvard influence. One can easily perceive, after reading the novel, how the story ran away from its author. The conception of the book is big, too big to be handled with the dexterity that the powerful theme

of "McTeague" afterward received from the more mature mind of its creator. The story of "Vandover and the Brute" did not work out as its author originally conceived it. The dominant idea of the novel possessed its writer to the exclusion of the less important details of the plot. The meeting of young Haight and Flossie in "The Imperial" was obviously intended to become a much more important episode. So it is with the character of Turner Bavis, which is allowed to drop out of the action of the story with a complete disregard of the care that was taken with its introduction and development. The pages of the original manuscript of "Vandover and the Brute" are eloquent of the struggle its author underwent to bring it to its logical and artistic conclusion.

The influence of Emil Zola is evident throughout the story. The great Frenchman was the inspiration that led Frank Norris to attempt the rôle of novelist. No one can question how well he succeeded. His own generation has acclaimed him one of America's greatest writers. "Vandover and the Brute" bears the evidence, I believe, of the most significant phase in his development as a writer. It is for that reason that it is published. Some may question the wisdom of this; yet there are passages in the novel that are as fine, if not finer, than anything he afterward wrote. In justice to the author, the reader should bear in mind that, just as much as "McTeague" was changed and improved before it was published, so "Vandover and the Brute" would have been altered and rewritten were its author here to bring to its revision his riper judgment.

In an essay entitled "The True Reward of the Novel-

ist," written by Frank Norris many years later, there occurs this passage:

"Once more we halt upon the great word — sincerity, sincerity, and again sincerity. Let the writer attack his . . . novel with sincerity and he cannot then go wrong. . . . His public may be small, perhaps, but he will have the better reward of the knowledge of a thing well done. Royalties on editions of hundreds of thousands will not pay him more to his satisfaction than that. To make money is not the province of the novelist. If he is the right sort, he has other responsibilities, heavy ones. He of all men cannot think only of himself or for himself. And when the last page is written and the ink crusts on the pen point and the hungry presses go clashing after another writer, the 'new man' and the new fashion of the hour, he will think of the grim, long grind, of the years of his life that he has put behind him, and of his work that he has built up volume by volume, sincere work, telling the truth as he saw it, independent of fashion and the gallery gods, holding to these with gripped hands and shut teeth — he will think of all this then, and he will be able to say: 'I never truckled; I never took off the hat to Fashion and held it out for pennies. By God! I told them the truth. They liked it or they didn't like it. What had that to do with me? I told them the truth; I knew it for the truth then, and I know it for the truth now.' And that is his reward — the best that a man may know; the only one worth the striving for."

There can be no better example of what Frank Norris had in mind than "Vandover and the Brute." One marvels at the courage that prompted him to write it. A novel

too strong to be always palatable, whose principal character may be described by any other name than that of "hero," a book whose only humour is that of the relentless realist, whose love element is hardly more than a sketch, and whose sinister story marches mercilessly to its inevitable and amazing conclusion! A first book of a hundred and twenty thousand words of such material! Where was he to find a publisher willing to print it? While he was writing it, he knew he should fail — that the work of those weary, endless hours in "47 Gray's," grinding the manuscript out page by page, was of no avail. One wonders if years later he remembered those hours when he wrote: "I told them the truth. They liked it or they didn't like it. What had that to do with me? I told them the truth; I knew it for the truth then, and I know it for the truth now."

CHARLES G. NORRIS.

February, 1914.

