Charles H. Brown, '33 jour., Pawhuska, is the winner of the $100 prize for the essay «The Quest for Understanding,» in a contest recently conducted by the Commission of Inter-Racial Co-Operation for race relations studies in southern colleges and schools. More than 100 essays were submitted by college students. Mr Brown's essay deals with the Negro situation and means of developing a better attitude of whites toward Negroes. It was written originally for a class in creative writing conducted by Mrs May Frank Rhoads, '22 journ.

The quest for understanding

BY CHARLES H. BROWN, '33

RACE prejudice, as most of our attitudes and opinions, is an acquired thing. The average white child has no more inclination to dislike a Negro than he has to dislike his own mother and father or any of the white people that he, in his limited range of experience, knows. Through careless remarks overheard and actions of adults toward Negroes, he gradually develops an antipathy, more or less strong, to people whose pigment differs from his own, though he may be frank and open-minded in other things.

My own experience has been of this sort. As a child, I often heard derogatory remarks spoken about the Negro. A nigger is a thief, a good-for-nothing. Give a nigger an inch and he'll take a mile. A nigger's all right in his place. Such remarks as these, and frequently much worse and not uncommonly profane ones, together with instances which the white people of my community showed their contempt of the Negro, developed in me the attitude generally held by the people I knew. Like many other people, there was no rancor in my race prejudice. I considered the Negro merely as an inferior species, who, by unfortunate circumstances, has been brought from his native home to this country. Too late to get rid of him, we must tolerate him so long as he keeps his place.

This opinion was gradually broken down. An incident here, a statement there—gradually I underwent a succession of experiences that led me to regard my old viewpoint not only as false but extremely harmful; and I now have an outlook that I believe is desirable. I have much further to travel, especially along the line of doing things to improve circumstances, but like many other people I have had more immediate things to do —getting an education and making a living—which have caused me to fail in putting my altruistic inclinations to work for the promotion of a better understanding of the race situation in America.

I shall not attempt to give all the occurrences leading up to my right-about face in regard to the race situation in America, but I shall give several of them. They may illustrate a mode of attack, probably obvious, which can be taken into consideration by those who are seeking by means of education to create a better understanding between the white and the black races.

One of the first incidents that stands out vividly in my mind and that has been most effective in making me realize "man's inhumanity to man," especially the white man's inhumanity to the black man, happened when I was ten years old. With a small playmate of mine and a half dozen or so street loungers, I was watching a Negro drive a team of somewhat cantankerous mules up the street. The team was hitched to what was probably the most fantastic wagon ever constructed for practical purposes. Next to its state of utter disrepair, the most noticeable thing about it was its tongue which was about twice as long as it should have been for utility. The sight was amusing, but the tone of the situation was changed when the mules reared back and the wagon tongue shot up in the air, ripping loose the top of a touring car parked on the side of the street. The owner of the automobile, a short, muscular, heavy-set man, was talking to a man in front of a store. When he saw what had happened, he went up to the frightened and apologetic Negro and commanded him to get down on his hands and knees in the dust of the street. He then started to flay the Negro with a rope which he took from the wagon. None of the onlookers interfered with him.

This incident raised thoughts in my mind. I wondered why any person had the right to beat and humiliate another man for something that could not be avoided. I knew that had a white man been driving the wagon the result of the accident would have been otherwise. I could not reconcile the actions of the owner of the car and the subjection of the owner of the broken-down wagon with my ideas of right and wrong.

I have since had extremer cases of injustice to the Negro impressed upon my mind. I shall never forget the stricken, hunted looks of Negroes who fled to our town seeking refuge from the Tulsa race riot and massacre. I boil with indignation when I think of pictures which I have seen of innocent Negroes hanging tragically and pitifully from trees and the charred remains of bodies burned at the stake. I lose all respect for America, the land of the brave and the home of the free, when I read of Negroes frightened out of their homes by white mobs. A knowledge of the horrors, not to say the thousands of humiliations, inflicted upon the Negroes in America has led me to think differently of the race problem, to want to do something to improve conditions.

The recognition that for one race to be downtrodden, denied of almost every right and privilege, while another, chiefly because numerically superior, can grasp all the things that make life worth liv-

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who had been privileged to live near this beautiful character. I know of no one whose ideals of Christian womanhood were higher, more sincere or more helpful. The dignity of her life was contagious; unhurried, always poised, she had time for every plea, every demand. The community has never been able to find a substitute for her gentle ministrations."

Miss Ruth Moore, instructor in piano, recalled her student days in King Hall.

"I lived there in 1917-'18 and '19," Miss Moore said. "During the war they had the Students' Army Training Corps here. The 'war-line' over which the boys were not allowed to cross without permission from the military heads ran along Duffy in front of King Hall.

"We had two dances a year then and the boys would have to get permission from the military heads to cross the street and come to the dances.

"I'll never forget the night some of the men got permission . . . and some of them were there anyway. During the dance a few couples went down to the Varsity . . . Oh! My land, yes, it was *the* Corner then. There wasn't any place else to go; it was the only shop we had. Well, they went down in couples and coming back the guard stopped some of them, sent the men back to the barracks and let the girls go home alone.

"One of the funniest things that happened, it was funny to us then, was the time a Spanish professor paid a friendly call and, backing out of the house in polite continental fashion, landed on the lawn."

The way the two houses were put together caused any one who was not familiar with the entrances to think there were steps where there weren't, Miss Moore explained. Even professors are likely to err once in awhile.

It was hoped that a similar house might be built for men, but as time went on, more sorority houses and dormitories were built and eventually King Hall was given over to men. It was so occupied up to the time of its razing this spring.

"Original plans were to build a quadrangle," Mr Lindloff said. "The concrete structure was to have been one unit of it."

Others were to be added later until the four groups of connected buildings with a court in the center made a complete quadrangle. Due to lack of funds this project has been temporarily abandoned and with the gift from undesignated legacies in the east, either a student center or a church could be built. Mr Lindloff explained.

Since Mr Lindloff's arrival in 1930, more seating space in the little St. John's Episcopal chapel was provided, but even that did not accommodate the congregation. Thereupon plans were worked out by Charles A. Popkin, Tulsa, architect; Rev Thomas Cassidy, bishop of the Oklahoma Episcopal churches, and Mr Lindloff for the new St. John's Episcopal church which will be ready for occupation when school opens in September. J. H. Fredrickson, Oklahoma City, is the contractor.

The junior church composed of children from about four to fourteen years old has increased fifty percent since Lindloff has been here. They shall continue to meet in the little chapel. The Student Forum, a group of university students, which Mr Lindloff introduced this year shall have a meeting place provided them and it is hoped that a student center might be added to the church in the near future.

King Hall memories of student life remain although the building itself has given place to a greater need that the work might move forward.

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NOTES FROM A FEMINIST'S TRAVEL DIARY: MADRID

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expenses by consolidating prisons and abolishing those that were insanitary or superfluous. The good of the prisoner and the good of the state; efficiency and economy: the dual purpose motivates her official life.

"Will you tell the women of the United States for me how touched and surprised I was by their generous enthusiasm when I was named to office?" she asked me. "It overwhelmed me to receive so many messages of congratulation and good wishes from the United States. Tell them," she added, with the sudden warm smile which erases the weariness from her face, "that they gave me a sense of friendship and companionship which has made your country seem very close to mine."

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THE QUEST FOR UNDERSTANDING

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ing—that such a state of affairs is unjust, unchristian, undesirable—has been one stage in my quest for understanding. The other stage, equally important, is of another sort. It is that the Negro is not, as it gratifies the Nordics to think, an inferior species but a man with great abilities, highly desirable qualities, and strengths, which if given an outlet, will do much for the improvement of our American civilization.

This latter point of view was gradually developed in the course of time, chiefly through reading and through conversations with high-minded men and women who had achieved their goal in the quest for understanding. I have learned that in Africa the Negro has a long heritage of high civilization, that though transplanted in the alien soil of America and forced into slavery, he has nevertheless made valuable contributions to our civilization and that he is now entering a period in which, if given the chance, he will accomplish incomprehensibly worthwhile things. I have learned, in brief, that the Negro is a gift-bearer rather than a gift-receiver, as we have too long considered him.

In light of almost insurmountable social, political, and industrial handicaps, the tremendous progress made by the Negro in industry, in education, in art and creative literature, in social and cultural life, in ethical and moral standards, in the past few years will always remain for me an inspiring thing. In literature, I have read the works of such Negro writers as Countee Cullen, Langston Hughes, Rudolph Fisher, Burghardt DuBois, Alain Locke, James Weldon Johnson, and I have developed a great admiration for them. I have heard Roland Hayes and Negro choruses sing, and I have a high opinion of the colored man as a creator and interpreter of music. I have read of the achievements of the Negro in science, in dramatics, in painting, and I have come to realize that he has a powerful intellect and distinct ability as an artist.

Accompanying this cultural advance, I have seen new conceptions develop as to the worth of the Negro among those who are well-informed. I have seen admiration where before there was only indifference or scorn. The better newspapers and magazines, in the wake of this cultural advance, have sought to mold public opinion toward a better understanding of the Negro, and among the educated classes there has been a tendency toward liberalism in the treatment of the Negro, an acceptance of him on his intrinsic merits.

This new attitude has come about because of a new appreciation of the Negro's worth. Outstanding individuals have proved that we no longer can consider the Negro as a superstitious, ignorant, lustful degenerate who must have the fear of the lord and the white man put into him. There has been a new tendency to judge the Negro in the light of the best of the race rather than the worse, as heretofore. Even the poor whites on Southern farms and those transplanted to the cities are no longer flabbergasted when they hear a Negro lawyer, preacher, physician, or teacher.

Such has been my prosaic quest for understanding. I presume that my history can be duplicated by thousands of other people throughout the country who have learned not only to look charitably upon the black man but to admire him as well. If such can happen to us, largely without conscious educational efforts on the part of other people, why cannot well-planned educational methods succeed for other people? Why cannot well-intentioned people who may be in-

different to the necessity for granting the Negro a new freedom be made to see their moral duty to assist in the solution of the race problem? Why cannot ignorant, prejudiced persons be made, by education, to see the light of truth?

I think there is no reason why these things cannot be done, and I believe that if those who have succeeded in their quest for understanding should attempt in their own little sphere of influence, to exert themselves, even only a little, they could gradually change the thought of the whole nation, just as a pebble dropped in a still pool of water sends out ripples that reach the farthest edges of the pool. It seems to me that the students in our colleges and universities should be the leaders in this movement for the adjustment of race difficulties. If not by college students, then by whom? The race problem in America has rocked along for many years, chiefly because of lack of well-directed effort by those who should be interested in setting right what is wrong. The solution of the difficulty lies in intelligence. How long must it be said that Americans do not use intelligence in the solution of one of the most vital problems? I consider this an urgent challenge to the young men and women of our colleges.

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A REDISCOVERY OF STEVENSON

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wife complained, so Osbourne says, that he "had missed the point; had missed the allegory; had made it merely a story—a magnificent bit of sensationalism—when it should have been a masterpiece." Stevenson, chagrined and hurt, nursed his pride for a few moments, then saw clearly his error, and with characteristic drama threw the story into the fire the same night. The next morning he started again and in another three days had written Jekyll and Hyde as we have it today. The seventh and eighth days he copied the whole, and sent it to the publisher on the ninth. Ninety-six thousand words, all in laborious longhand, in eight days! And words put together into an ingenious allegory, words as poignant and chock full of meaning as any he ever wrote. This feat, I believe, is unequaled, unapproached, in literature.

Gay, bubbling, enthusiastic, the love of writing literally drove pain from his thoughts, if not from his body. Not that he never complained; what human could live the stoic ideal with trials such as his to bear? Philosophically he was discouraged at times, as all who think candidly about life are bound to be, but his complaints against living and society—when they are voiced—are complaints with a difference; they always leave me with a clean taste in my mouth and hope in my heart; always a buoyant force is in my mind after conversation with this armchair friend of mine. I sit back and laugh and applaud as I watch Stevenson, stalking through his papers, sleeves rolled-up, branishing a knotted washrag wherewith he scours with soap the mouths of all morbid beraters of every positive human value, past and present. When R. L. S. is aroused the cannonading of his irony is terrific; he has a way, when most depressed about men or events, of being a capital humorist. After all—the sophisticated and the pretending-to-be-sophisticated won't admit it—the joys of life are in our transitions to romantic, sentimental, and humorous worlds.

A characteristic of Stevenson that has been the special delight of my rediscovery of him is the remarkable, chameleon-like changeability of his opinions and moods. And surely, as he says: "To hold the same views at forty as we held at twenty is to have been stupified for a score of years, and take rank not as a prophet, but as an unteachable brat, well birched and none the wiser." In his dedications (to which Thomas Stevenson, his father, turned when all other books failed him) he is conscious and thankful that his thinking has been capable of mutations; in one he says: "It is good to have been young in youth and, as years go on, to grow older . . . . to travel deliberately through one's ages is to get the heart out of a liberal education. Times change, opinions vary to their opposite, and still this world appears a brave gymnasium, full of sea-bathing, and horse-exercise, and bracing, manly virtues . . . " And full, I might add, in one of Stevenson's most choice descriptions, "of generals who go galloping up and down among the bomb-shells in absurd cocked hats."

A word for his letters. Christopher Morley—that most excellent American essayist—says he presented four volumes of Stevenson's letters to himself on his twenty-first birthday. I did the same on my twenty-third. They are the best birthday present I ever gave myself. The "Open Letter to the Reverend Dr. Hyde of Honolulu" (to be found in the *Vailima Papers*) is one of the most devastating invectives—a thorough castigation it is—ever written. Even Doctor Johnson's immortal letter to Lord Chesterfield does not hold a candle to it.

So was his spirit strong until death burst a blood vessel in his brain while in the midst of dictating *Weir of Hermiston,* called by many his best work. This fine unfinished novel is broken off in the middle of a sentence: "It seemed unprovoked, a wilful convulsion of brute nature. . . ." Little did he realize how fully those last words describe the tragedy of his untimely end. He was buried the next day on the summit of Mt. Vaea, on that "ultimate island" of Upolu, in the South seas, the one place in all his wanderings where he had found peace.

His last letter had been to Edmund Gosse. It closes: "Well, my dear Gosse, here's wishing you all health and prosperity, as well as to the mistress and the bairns. May you live long, since it seems as if you would continue to enjoy life. May you write many more books as good as this one (*In Russett and Silver,* poems)—only there's one thing impossible, you can never write another dedication that can give the same pleasure to the vanished

TUSITALA."

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A PLAN FOR IMPROVING FRATERNITY SCHOLARSHIP

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of the plan depends predominately upon the individual who undertakes the work. Unless he himself have scholarly attainments; is broad minded enough to understand younger men; is experienced enough in educational matters to be able quickly and surely to point the way; is possessed of capacity for leadership so as to create confidence on the part of those whom he leads, his administration will fall far short of its possibilities.

Assuming however that he is fairly competent, what may reasonably be expected of the adviser? First, that he do his own work so well as to become an encouraging example; second, that he become well acquainted with the inner personality of the chapter members; third, that he help all freshmen to choose wisely their courses; fourth that he learn through frequent contacts with their concerned instructors on the faculty what members are weak in classroom work and the reason therefor and then that he make a special effort at correction; fifth that he see that proper silent hours are observed and hold study hall when necessary for all who need it; sixth, that he give intelligent counsel where needed on extra curricular activities.

If a student's fault is lack of application to study or class attendance, then with the help of the chapter further requirements and restrictions must be enforced until that lack is removed; if the fault is due to preoccupation with other and extraneous matters, efforts must be made to meet that condition, usually heart to heart talks with the adviser and appeals to pride are effective; if not, then the chapter must take a hand; if poor preparation for the course is evident either a change of course or a special coach over the preparation ground work is indicated and one or the other