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The contents of a document obliterated with blood, ink, or other substance frequently can be disclosed through infra-red photography (see figs. 2 and 3), while altered or erased documents just as frequently will disclose their secrets when examined by means of ultra violet light, or when chemically treated to restore writing which may have been bleached through some chemical process. Occasionally specimens of burnt or charred paper are submitted with a view to identifying the remains as being those of documents alleged to have been destroyed, or to disclosing the contents of an incriminating message.

Again, cases are sometimes submitted requesting information as to the possible similarity between two samples of paper, ink, etc. This problem may further be complicated by a request for information as to the probable date or age of the document, which information in some cases definitely can be given; whereas under different circumstances no information, or at best only a vague answer can be given. In order to answer the former question the use of accurate measuring instruments, colour comparison charts and the microscope are required in conjunction with various chemical tests.

In passing, it may of interest to note that many of the glass test plates and measuring instruments used must be made by first preparing large scale drawings which are reduced to the required size by photography on glass plates, which are placed over the questioned writing, typing, etc., and photographed together. This clearly demonstrates such points as angles or spacing in writing and malalignment of typewriting.