

So in a day or two Cash started pickin' up the waste, pilin' it in his flatboat

## In the Public Interest

By Frederick Skerry

THE chairman of the welfare board checked names on a list of prospective cases. But at the name of Cash Dancy he paused, pursed his lips, and shook his head.

"I can't rightly okay Cash Dancy for town and state relief, Bert."

Bert Moseley looked surprised. "But, Mr. Tate, he seems to need assistance more than any case I've investigated. He—"

"Yeh, I know, Bert. Seems to be right. But you, bein' kind of new to the town, wouldn't know about Cash."

"Well, if I can't recognize the earmarks of want when I see 'em, maybe a mistake was made in sendin' me down here to look after the state's end of this relief business."

"Oh, now, Bert! I ain't criticizin' your work. Get me? It's just that you don't understand Cash, that's all. Want! Well, Cash ain't never in want because he don't want much."

"Just because he hasn't asked for relief is no argument, as I see it."

"Cash ain't asked for anythin' in his life—not even for work, Bert. What was he doin' when you seen him?"

"Why, he was sittin' outside that miserable shack of his—the very picture of want and discouragement."

The chairman nodded. "An', I suppose, he was busy with somethin'—cleanin' his gun, or whittlin' thole pins for his boat, or somethin'."

"Why—no. He was just sittin' there."

"Sure. I know. He's just sittin' there most o' the time."

"But a man of his age, Mr. Tate—"

"Shuh! Age! Why, Cash Dancy ain't as old as I am—not by several years. You can't go by whiskers, Bert. I could have 'em too, only I ain't too dod-blamed shiftless to shave. What looked

like want to you, Bert, is just plain shiftlessness. Understand, I'm all for this town-and-state help for people. I know that a considerable part of the money goes to them as ain't rightly entitled to any help, but there's a lot of folks that need help because of one thing or another—old people that's left without support, or ailin' people not able to work, and people that would be glad to work if there was work to be got, that'd rather work than take help. But Cash Dancy ain't among any of 'em.

"Hard times ain't done nothin' to Cash; when times was good he was just the same as he is now, Bert. Cash ain't the result of the times; he's the result of a state o' mind. Like a college professor said, who came down here for his lungs and got to know Cash, he has livin' reduced to its simplest terms. Needin' so little, it don't take much effort to get all he needs.

"Right there on the riverbank he can catch himself a mess o' fish whenever he likes—ain't sayin' he does, but there's the fish for the takin'. An' he can gun for rabbits an' such—don't know as he does, but they're waitin' if he hankers for 'em. 'Course fish need cleanin', an' rabbits need skinnin'—and that's somethin' Cash'd consider.

"THEN he has a still in the hills somewhere—couldn't say where and wouldn't if I could. But he makes the finest corn likker that's made in these parts. An' that's a mystery because fine corn means extra work. But maybe Cash is a mite partic'lar about somethin' he likes himself. Anyhow, the money he gets for his corn likker buys the few things he needs—a little flour, a little coffee, salt, sugar, tobacco, ca'tridges an' such. Cash Dancy ain't in what you'd

call want, Bert—well, maybe you'd call it want.

"I ain't sayin' his income wouldn't class him as bein' needy. But his way of livin' don't signify need. An' givin' Cash Dancy money would be his ruination. Why, givin' him money would take away his independence by removin' the necessity of doin' anythin'—even if what he does is to make corn likker an' is a little unlawful. Up to an' includin' now Cash ain't asked no favors of anybody—an' to my mind that makes him better than a lot o' people I could mention. An' as that college professor would say, it'd be malfeasance to make such subversive use of public funds.

"An' that's to say nothin' about Cash Dancy's peace o' mind, Bert. I believe it'd worry Cash to have more money kickin' around than he needs. If Cash thought anythin' of money he could've had some any time before now. But evidently he don't want it. Why, look: For years he's been just sittin' out in front of that shack of his, lookin' at nothin' except the waste from the saw-mills goin' down-river with the current, and maybe a kingfisher or two, hoverin', waitin' to dive at a fish. But one day he is hangin' around Dickson's mill, a mile above his shack. Just standin' around watchin' the logs go through.

"An' Dickson says, 'Cash, you've got a flatboat, ain't you?' Cash allowed he had. 'Well,' says Dickson, 'look at all the waste floatin' down. You pick it up and pile it on my wharf, and I'll sell it off for firewood and give you half what I get for it. What say?'

"Cash thought it over, then he says, 'All right, I'll do it.'

"'Fine!' says Dickson. 'There's a lot of it right now.'

"So in a day or two Cash started pickin' up the waste, pilin' it in his flatboat an' stackin' it on Dickson's dock. In a couple o' weeks he has quite a pile on the dock. Then one day he goes to Dickson. 'I been thinkin',' he says. 'This here waste is mine if I pick it up.'

"'Sure, it is,' Dickson laughs. 'Yours—or anybody's.'

"'Well,' says Cash, 'I ain't goin' halves with nobody. I'm quittin'.'

"AN' HE just quit an' never picked up another slab. There ain't so much floats down now as did then, but what there is Cash just sits and looks at. So, y' see, it ain't money that Cash wants. You got the wrong idea about Cash Dancy, Bert."

"Well, Mr. Tate, it sure looks so. I'll just cross his name off."

"Thought you would, Bert, when you got the facts."

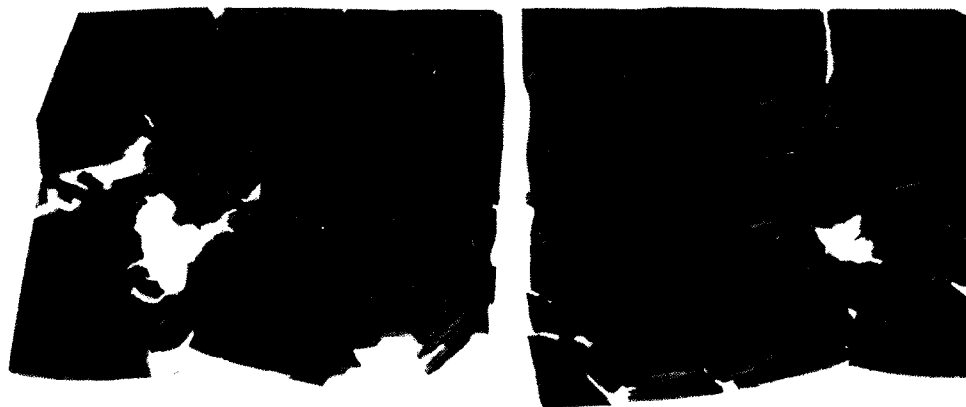
With relief, the chairman watched Bert Moseley's disappearing back, listened to the sounds of his footsteps on the bare stairs. When the sounds ceased Tate drew forth a large handkerchief and wiped his brow. Huh! Outsiders coming and interfering with the internal affairs of a community! It would be against public interest to put Cash Dancy on the relief rolls. Anyhow, this business wouldn't go on forever; it would stop one day and then Cash Dancy would be just where he was now.

But in the meantime, with free money coming in, Cash would quit making corn likker! And then what would people do? Chairman Tate grew dry just imagining such a prospect. Licking his lips, he leaned to pull out a drawer of his desk, a lower drawer and deep, that must have been intended to hold a gallon jug.



An ordinary photograph of a check that had been charred beyond any degree of legibility and (below) a photograph of the same remnants taken with infrared radiation

Collier's for September 17, 1938



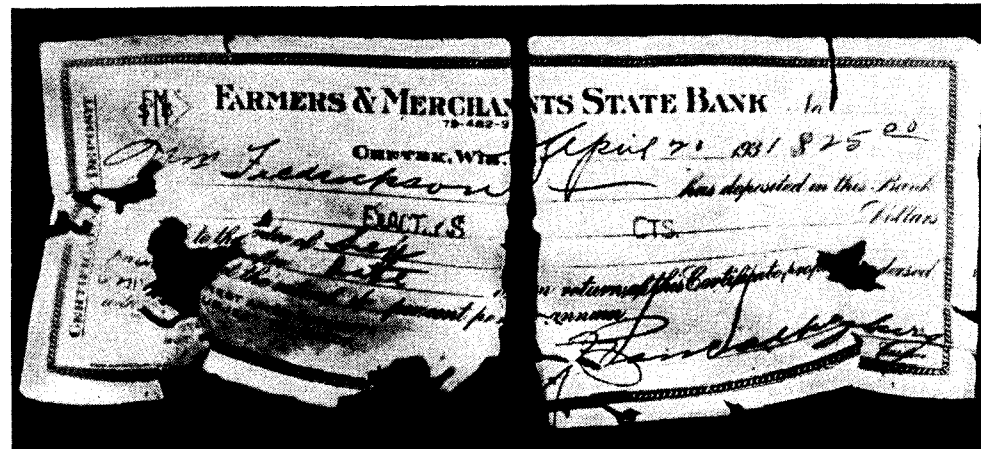
JOHN F. TYRRELL



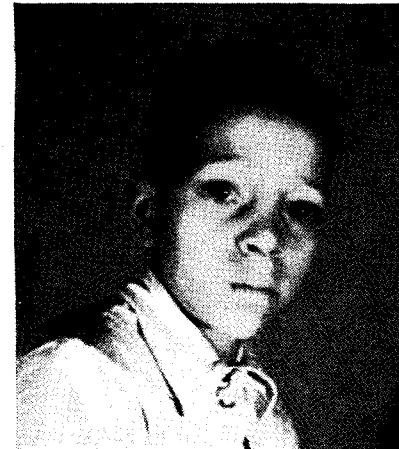
## Don't Trust Your Eyes

By Carl Norcross

To catch action too fast to see or too slow to see, objects too far away or too small, call a cameraman. Dr. Norcross gives you the story of what he can do



JOHN F. TYRRELL



It's hard to photograph a colored boy in the dark, but it can be done. Upper right shows picture in ordinary light. Lower, in darkness with the use of infrared rays

TO MOST of the sixteen million Americans who own photographic equipment, a camera is still something to take on a picnic. Unknown to this army of shutter clickers, the camera has graduated from the picnic grounds to the halls of science. In addition to taking science pictures, photographers today can take pictures through a foot of steel or concrete as well as through all parts of the human body. Still pictures taken at one millionth of a second and motion pictures at speeds up to 8,000 pictures a second give engineers their first significant glimpse of machinery moving so fast the eye cannot see it. Biologists record the mysterious changes going on in human body, metallurgists build our age of steel on their spectrographic analyses. In research laboratories throughout the length and breadth of the land the camera is the newest and most dramatic of scientific instruments. Modern crime chasers use photog-

raphy in many ways. A bond forger destroyed his unsold bonds by burning them. Police found a few small pieces of crisp, charred paper and infrared photography brought out enough evidence to convict the forger. Film sensitive to infrared rays, and a red filter were used, which is the same infrared method by which aerial photographs are taken through haze. The way infrared worm beneath the visible surface of materials is miraculous. Infrared photography also solved the recent murder case of a young woman. After her death suspicion fell on a businessman but he denied knowing her. Detectives found that a small square, where a name might have been written, had been cut from one page of a calendar pad on the man's desk. The page below was photographed and, from the faint impression of the writing, out popped the girl's name. Forgeries of passports or other documents are often easy to detect with infrared or ultraviolet rays because the

### Quick, Watson, the Spectrograph

Many forgeries are crudely done and marked paper is not needed. Water-ink used by forgers show up differently from those of the originals. Take the sad case of Hazel—a blonde from Los Angeles who was taking care of her old-age security by cultivating an elderly and wealthy apartment-house owner. When he died Hazel filed his will and claimed the fortune. Photography revealed that while the signature was genuine, Hazel had taken a bona fide letter and chemically removed everything but the signature. Then she faked the handwriting for the body of the will. takes pictures of the light rays given off by burning metals. This is how it works: A burglar cuts his way through a window screen, does his thieving and goes home. Later his pocketknife reveals a minute amount of metal dust. It is burned in the spectrograph and a photographic plate made of the light rays. Their wavelength proves the dust to have been the same substance as the metal of the screen. Metal dust on the clothing of a suspected person may be the turning point in a case. In the field of medicine, the camera has become a companion piece to the microscope and has carved for itself a niche in the medical hall of fame. Medical photography is now being used by a thousand physicians and medical researchers where one used it a few years ago. When Pasteur looked through his microscope at living bacteria, only he and his assistants could see what was happening in the world of tiny life at the other end of the microscope. If Lister going on, he had to journey to France to look through the microscope for himself. Today scientific descendants of Pasteur attach cameras to the microscopes, peering through one eyepiece while the camera is aimed through another. When an event of importance occurs, (Continued on page 27)