

dejection in his uncle's attitude quite out of keeping with customary poise.

The subject of these observations reached abruptly for the decanter on the desk and poured himself a stiff drink of Scotch whisky. The neck tinkled a little tattoo against the glass. He swallowed the liquor neat and shook his head in a spasmodic grimace. The sigh with which he settled back in his chair was one of utter weariness.

Phil gave a slight cough to announce his presence.

"Pardon me, Uncle Milt, if I'm intruding, but I didn't know you were in town—— Why, what's wrong?" he ended quickly; for his uncle had sprung from his chair and was clinging to the edge of the desk for support while he stared as if he were gazing at an apparition.

In truth, quite aside from his quiet entry, the young man's appearance was startling enough. His facial disfigurement achieved a bizarre effect which the condition of his clothes served to heighten. The once jaunty panama hat hung shapelessly about his ears and from beneath it a plaster of blond hair slanted across his forehead rakishly. His collar was a soggy mess, from which depended a dark red string in sorry travesty of a flowing tie. His shirt was soiled with mud, his coat and trousers full of wrinkles.

"For heaven's sake, boy! What's happened? Train wreck?" He dropped back into his chair,