

CHAPTER IV

ENTER THE GREAT PHILANTHROPIST

MARSHALL GAULT, adopted son and heir of the Railroad King, sat at his desk opening letters, dictating answers to a secretary, jotting down memoranda, occasionally giving orders through a speaking-tube, always lucid, direct, abrupt, doing his work with the concentrated attention of a powerful, healthy brain. Chiefs of departments ventured from time to time into his presence, fortunate if the master received their business without impaling them with a glance of his grey eyes; for Marshall Gault ruled the weak by terror as he governed the strong by force of character. His was a tremendous intellect, that seized upon facts, grouped them, grasped their whole import, used them swiftly, and perceived the entire results with unerring accuracy; a great administrative brain; the genius of the twentieth century, that had lifted him from the ranks of the dominant race, and stamped him master.

At Michael Gault's death Marshall had inherited money enough to buy a New York daily paper; in nine years he had made the *Avenger* the richest, the most independent, the most powerful journal in the New World. Other journalists, two or three of them, were politically strong enough at times to influence events at Washington; but Gault wielded a weapon that can only be handled by a man of genius—his