IV. THE NOVEL OF ADVENTURE
HE PRELIMINARY REMARKS of the preceding chapter apply to the present one as well. This study frequently approaches its subject through striking features of the novel-plots. Precedence is thus given to one aspect of the plot, yet the element singled out often may not appear to sustain the reader's interest exclusively or even predominantly. Among the novels classified as love stories, for example, there are many in which the element of the adventuresome is an essential ingredient. Conversely, the theme of romantic love suggests numerous plot elements in the novels of adventure to be introduced next. Nevertheless, in the narratives discussed in the preceding pages, the adventurous element does not truly rival the primary focusing on the issue of the love story; it is subordinated to it, being itself conditioned by the lovers' efforts toward reunion or, more commonly, their enemies' attempts at keeping them apart. On the other hand, the true novel of adventure as often as not strikes one as the work of a writer who seems to have kept on spinning adventures for the sake of enjoying and taxing his powers of invention; such fashioning of tales does not limit itself to devising tests for some lovers' steadfastness. Novels of adventure introduce situations whose immediate outcome is more important to the reader than the final conclusion toward which the story is moving. The question whether the heroine can escape the villain blots out the sad fact that her lover is still pining for her to return to him. In reading a love story, one does not forget the mutual love of the hero and heroine, though they may be worlds apart and quite estranged, perhaps even unfaithful, in appearance; and while the girl is strenuously busy preserving her virtue, she remains aware that among her motives for doing so is her wish to be worthy of her lover. But the lovers in an adventure story, as for instance Constantius and to some extent
Pulchera, occasionally do lose sight of that which gives some meaning to their incredible adventures—that is, the fact that they have a love to live for—so completely are they absorbed in extricating their lives from immediate perils.