

PREFACE

It was my father's practise, in planning a novel, first to prepare a most complete synopsis from beginning to end—never proceeding with the actual writing of the book until he had laid out the characters and action of the story—chapter by chapter.

This synopsis, which closely resembled the scenario of a play, he kept constantly enriching with little side-notes as they occurred to him—new ideas and points of detail.

So spirited were these synopses, and so clearly did they reflect the process of his mind, that by the few who saw them in the course of publishing consultations, or friendly confidence, they were remembered often after the finished novel had obliterated its constructive lines.

A scheme like this he had prepared for "Enoch Crane"—a story which, like "Felix O'Leary," he had very much at heart. Once he had begun a novel it occupied his whole mind. He lived—as it were—with the characters he was developing, to the exclusion of all other work. He would talk to me constantly of their welfare or vicissitudes, and was often in grand good humor when any of them had proved themselves worthy by their wit, their courage, or their