Introductory Note:
Written in 1816, partly as a result of her encounter with Mr. Clarke, Jane Austen returns here to her earlier habit (in the Juvenilia and Northanger Abbey) of parodying what was ridiculous in the popular literature of her day -- in this case perfectly virtuous heroines (she confessed in one of her letters that "pictures of perfection make me sick and wicked"), villainous aristocratic would-be ravisheis, and high toned literary sentiments and vehement emotions instead of a natural depiction of real life. The Plan of a Novel also incorporates some of the would-be helpful "advice" that most authors can't help receiving from family, friends, and strangers (the original manuscript includes marginal notes indicating those who were responsible for certain suggestions).

E-text of the “Plan of a Novel”

SCENE to be in the Country, Heroine the Daughter of a Clergyman, one who after having lived much in the World had retired from it and settled in a Curacy, with a very small fortune of his own. -- He, the most excellent Man that can be imagined, perfect in Character, Temper, and Manners -- without the smallest drawback or peculiarity to prevent his being the most delightful companion to his Daughter from one year's end to the other. -- Heroine a faultless Character herself, -- perfectly good, with much tenderness and sentiment, and not the least Wit -- very highly accomplished, understanding modern Languages and (generally speaking) everything that the most accomplished young Women learn, but particularly excelling in Music -- her favourite pursuit -- and playing equally well on the PianoForte and Harp -- and singing in the first stile. Her Person quite beautiful -- dark eyes and plump cheeks. -- Book to open with the description of Father and Daughter -- who are to converse in long speeches, elegant Language -- and a tone of high serious sentiment. -- The Father to be induced, at his Daughter's earnest request, to relate to her the past events of his Life. This Narrative will reach through the greatest part of the first volume -- as besides all the circumstances of his attachment to her Mother and their Marriage, it will comprehend his going to sea as Chaplain to a distinguished naval character about the Court, his going afterwards to Court himself, which introduced him to a Cottage, they are compelled to retreat into Kamschatka where the poor Father, quite worn down, finding his end approaching, throws himself on the Ground, and after 4 or 5 hours of tender advice and parental Admonition to his miserable Child, expires in a fine burst of Literary Enthusiasm, intermingled with Invectives against holders of Tithes. -- Heroine inconsolable for some time -- but afterwards crawls back towards her former Country -- having at least 20 narrow escapes from falling into the hands of the Anti-hero -- and at last in the very nick of time, turning a corner to avoid him, runs into the arms of the Hero himself, who having just shaken off the scruples which fetter'd him before, was at the very moment setting off in pursuit of her. -- The Tenderest and completest Eclaircissement takes place, and they are happily united. -- Throughout the whole work, Heroine to be in the most elegant Society and living in high style. The name of the work not to be Emma, but of the same sort as S. & S. and P. & P.

Notes
"curacy": A "curate" was a Church of England clergyman on the lowest rung of the hierarchy of ecclesiastical endowment (entitlement to agricultural tithes, and security of tenure): curate, vicar, rector.
"Eclaircissement": The clearing up of anything that is obscure or not easily understood; an explanation.

from The Republic of Pemberley website (http://www.pemberley.com/janeinfo/plannovl.html)