

"MONKSWOLD."

BY

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I.

Among the many grand and beautiful estates with which England abounds, Monkswold must rank among the finest and most beautiful; not only on account of its enchanting grounds, fine park and grand old forest, but also on account of the ruins of the old monastery, famed alike in history and in song. For many generations it had been in possession of the Fordyce family, fitting owners of such a noble inheritance.

At the time my story opens the family consisted of but three members,—Sir Richard Fordyce, his wife and their only son Harold, a worthy descendant of his distinguished ancestors. For many years the family had lived in comparative seclusion because of the delicate health of Lady Fordyce, but as she saw her son, a man in years, she determined that their seclusion should last no longer. As she had no daughter of her own and wished for a companion in her declining years she hoped to find both in the wife of her boy. Sir Richard agreed with her, and added, he "thought it high time he had some grandchildren climbing on his