

# OLIVIA MARY

## CHAPTER I

MRS. AMBROSE stood at one of the windows of the long low-roofed apartment that was the general sitting-room in Garth Court. Ambitiously named, the place was in reality nothing more than a farmhouse; a large stockyard, now empty, lay just to the right of the house and the cowsheds and stables flanked it on the left. Still, farmers' habitation as it had been, Garth Court was not without a certain charm of its own; it was solidly built and well proportioned, standing on a slight eminence and surrounded by a number of fine trees. The house was old, according to some people in the village it dated back three hundred years or so; and there were various signs to prove that this might have been the case, for the floors were very uneven in places and most of the roofs were supported by big strong beams. Helen Ambrose loved this house: it had made an instantaneous appeal to the sense of romance which with other fresh and delightful qualities kept youth in her so vividly, although her plentiful brown hair was beginning to be softly touched with grey.