



LONG SMOOTH-HEADED
POPPY.

scattered irregularly but lavishly through the straight ranks, and are here and there clustered in bold masses, which give out a great blaze of colour. It has been more than once noted that we have not in the whole range of our native plants another with flowers of that wonderful glowing scarlet; and it is a delight to maidens to gather a handful of them and fix them at waist or bosom. Horticultural science has turned some of the poppies into great double flowers resembling pæonies, hollyhocks, dahlias, and roses; but somehow those manufactured articles lack the charm of the wildlings scattered through the corn—which, we feel, is their most fitting place. Take them from their natural surroundings, and they lose much of their beauty; gather the flowers to decorate your table, and you will find that they give off a heavy odour that is far from pleasant indoors. That odour is significant of the peculiar property of the poppy, which has been celebrated from very remote periods as the emblem of drowsiness. One species possesses this quality in a far greater degree than the others, and its milky juice, when dried, becomes the enervating drug, opium, which exercises such a deadly, enslaving power over all who become addicted to its use.

Some of my readers may not know that we have no less than four distinct species which are natives of these islands, though they are not all generally distributed. They might all be growing in the same field—though this is not probable—and the superficial observer might easily regard them as only one kind; but there are such differences as make it no difficult task to separate them under their proper names.



LONG PRICKLY-
HEADED POPPY.

All the poppy tribe agree in having only two sepals, as the outer green flower leaves are called, and four petals or coloured leaves. The projecting central ovary, which becomes the seed capsule after the flower has perished, is urn-like, and has a peculiar sloping roof formed by the united stigmas. The sepals are severed, and drop right away

when the flower opens, and the crowded stamens and the petals do likewise as soon as the fertilization of the future seeds is effected. Then the erect seed-urns are left, terminating the shoots, with a series of little doors just under the eaves, which open when the seeds are ripe, so that when the winds of autumn bow the frail stems to the right angle the tiny round seeds can be shaken out through these doors and scattered far and wide.

The Common Poppy (*Papaver rhæas*) is the one that causes the brilliant display in southern cornfields. Its flowers, though very variable in size, attain, under ordinary conditions, a diameter of four inches; and the petals form two pairs, one pair being much smaller than the other. The seed-urn has a little stalk above, where the petals were attached, and is smooth and inclined to be globose in form. The rounded roof of the urn is marked with from eight to twelve rays. The stamens are thread-like. The flower-stalks are covered with more or less spreading hairs, and each of the lobes of the divided leaf ends in a bristle. This species is quite a month later than the others in its flowering period, commencing in June and continuing until August or September. The others begin in May, and have finished in July.

The Long Smooth-headed Poppy (*Papaver dubium*) is very like the common poppy, but differs in the following respects:—the seed-urn has no stalk above the flower, it is more egg-shaped, and the rays on its roof vary from six to twelve. The hairs on the flower-stalk do not spread out, but are pressed somewhat closely to the stalk.

The Round Rough-headed Poppy (*Papaver hybridum*) has a round seed-urn covered with bristles, and the rays numbering from four to eight only. The lobes of the leaves are drawn out into long points. The flower is only an inch or two across, with a black centre, and the stamens increase in stoutness upwards.

The remaining native species is the Long Prickly-headed Poppy (*Papaver argemone*), which is similar to the last named, but smaller and weaker—in fact, the smallest of our poppies. The seed-urn, instead of being globular,



ROUND ROUGH-HEADED
POPPY.



OPIUM POPPY.