"Can you play with your head too?" he asked; then he noticed there were tears running down her cheeks. "Don't cry," he said; "I'll run out and ask mother to let you off. Did she say you'd got to practise an hour? Oh, I'll soon get her to let you off!"

Challis smiled faintly through her tears.

"It's all right," she said; "don't disturb mother. No one told me to practise."

"Well, you *are* a muggins!" said the uncouth bushikin. "Catch *me* setting myself a copy or a sum. Why don't you go out and play?"

Challis let a new tear fall.

"I don't know how to play anything," she said. "I never had anyone to play with."

Roly's breast swelled with magnanimity.

"Look here," he said, "you can be Cronje if you like. Here, you can have these two for your weapons." He handed her the stove-brush and the corkscrew. "Come on down here, I'll soon show you how to do it."

Challis shook her head.

"No," she said, "I'm fifteen; it's too late to learn now. I'll just have to go on playing and playing at concerts. And who cares when you're playing your very best, and have practised one composition six hours a day? Who cares?" She looked at him miserably.

"Look here, Chall," he said, a most brotherly, kindly tone in his voice, "it's only because you play such fat-headed things, that's why they don't care. I can't listen to them myself. Often when I've been digging my garden outside the window, and you've started to play, I've just had to go away. If you'd learn some nice-sounding pieces now, instead of things like Flossie's scales, only worse! There's Peter Small's sister, down in W'gandra—you ought to hear *her* play; she can play 'Soldiers of the Queen,' and 'Sons of the Empire,' and 'Absent-Minded Beggar,' and 'Girl He Left Behind Him,' and all those things, and she jumps her hands about, and runs up and down, and crosses them just as much as you do. If you like I'll ask Peter to get her to lend you them; I'm friends with Peter just now."

Challis smiled and dried her tears.

"I mightn't be able to play them, Roly," she said; "so I don't think I'll trouble you to ask."

"Oh," said Roly encouragingly, "you'd soon pick them up. You could watch her a few times, and notice how she does them. But I'll have to be going now, Challis, if you don't want me. I'll be down in the bush at the back, if you want to come and have a try to play. Don't let on to Brownie that I've collared this." He pointed to the gravy-strainer that adorned his breast. "I'll bring it back all right."

Left alone once more, Challis wandered about the little house. Miss Browne's door was half open to let in the evening breeze. Miss Browne herself, her day's work finished, was sitting at the table writing a multitude of letters with a happy flush on her cheeks.

Challis looked on wistfully.

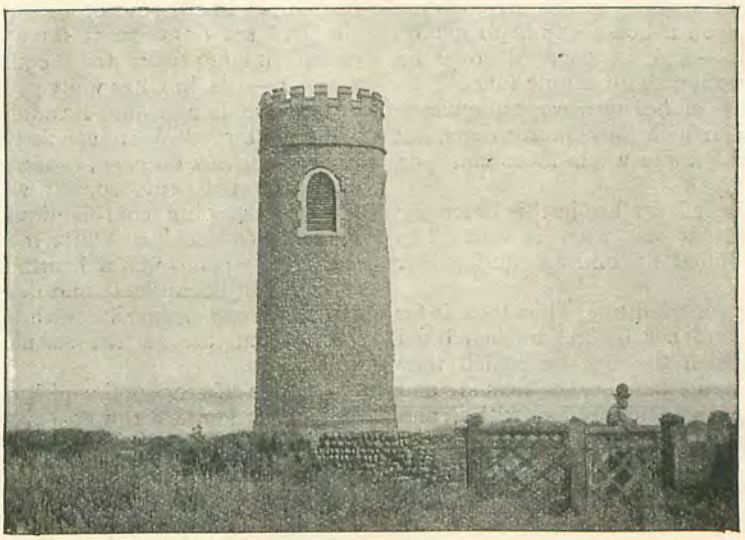
"Would you mind if I came in and sat with you?" she said.

Miss Browne dropped her pen and jumped up to welcome her.

"My dear, my love, why, you know you may; most pleased, most delighted, whenever you like—honoured, most delighted."

Challis stepped into the little room.

(*To be continued.*)



"THE GARDEN OF SLEEP."

IN POPPYLAND.

By Rev. W. DURBAN, B.A.

Never did any district in our land better deserve the fame which has of late years come to it than the lovely stretch of coast which extends on each side of Cromer. This is the region on the northern edge of Norfolk which was "discovered" to the great world outside it only a few years ago by Mr. Clement Scott. "Poppyland," the romantic name which the noted author conferred on a particular portion of the beautiful Norfolk downs, is equally well merited by the whole district. The corn-fields, the edges of the cliffs overhanging the sea, the hedgerows, and many of the little dells in the great golf-links are literally blazing all through the middle of summer with the glorious scarlet of the flowers of sleep.

Along the railway lines, on the turnpike roads, on the

margins of the delightful copses, in the meadows and under the towering and ragged cliffs, you never lose sight of the crimson, now spread in magnificent sheets, now torn into brilliant shreds, and again scattered in staccato dots like the notes of a trumpet. But the tints of Poppyland are never garish. The splashes and dashes of red which would make the land for miles round like some vast altar of sacrifice are always relieved by the delicious green of the countless little fragments of coppice and plantation; or by the richer verdure of the gorse; or by the harmonious competition of the ripening corn; or, if the eye travels seaward, by the supremacy of deepest azure in ocean and sky.

No more vivid contrast can be imagined than that between bright and busy little Cromer and the enchanted solitude of the "Garden of Sleep," the spot where stands the lonely round tower, which is the only relic of the church that once stood on the edge of the cliff two miles from the town.

Sidestrand parish church was threatened with the same fate which overtook Shipden—the town now buried under the sea a mile out from Cromer. In the days when Shipden was a very important port, Cromer was a mere village lying inland. The ravages of the sea had, by the year 1337, washed away the greater portion of Shipden churchyard, and as it was clear that the church and town could not long escape, the inhabitants in the reign of Richard III. began to retreat inland, and they gradually turned Cromer into a town. And a charming town it has become!

I know of no place within easy reach of London and of the great midland and northern towns more worthy of being considered as an ideal holiday resort for jaded workers seeking a bracing rest than Cromer. The capital of poppyland is characterised by a unique combination of attractions. Some of these are positive and some are negative. I have long since come to understand that for a healthy and reposeful vacation a place may be as desirable for what it lacks as for what it possesses.

In Cromer there is continual animation, yet we are far from that "madding crowd" of all the species of excursionists who invade and inundate many a scene of beauty. There is a grand old parish church, very mediæval, but modernised in all its conveniences for the worshippers. Ritualism is unknown. An excellent little town band plays on the esplanade several times a week. No pier stretches its way far into the sea, on which we may promenade. The tiny jetty was swept away two years ago, and only a few gaunt monumental timbers stand up to indicate where that modest apology for a pier challenged the billows. No pavilion exists to make pretence at being a miniature kursaal. How blessedly free is such a place from the dissipations which would spoil it for the people who long to obey the call of the glorious sea, and to yield to the healthy and natural pleasures which are soon vitiated either by full-dress fashion or by throngs of excursionists!

The good people of Cromer, and of the whole of the splendid strand which lies at the foot of the lofty crumbling cliffs for fifty miles, claim that theirs is really the north coast of England, for it is the only strip which really has a northern aspect. That magnificent curve of Norfolk looks right out to the North Pole, without a speck of land anywhere between Norfolk and the frozen icepack. Not even Iceland comes between. In all its many moods old Homer's "many-laughing ocean" is here spread out before us. What storms hurl the billows against those soft cliffs, and what sweet calms hush the waves into ripples at the foot of the Garden of Sleep!

Let us set out for the real luxury of a walk to the Garden of Sleep. We shall soon see why Mr. Clement luxuriated in the fascinations of this corner of East Anglia, and why Lord Battersea finds life worth living in his sequestered residence which we shall presently pass: as well as why the youngest daughter of the King fell in love two years ago with Poppyland, and intends to have a residence in the neighbourhood.

As we come out of the quaint and narrow street on the east side of the little town, unmistakably belonging to the Middle Ages, when the town was built, we are, in two minutes, on the edge of the cliff over the gap which leads down to the beach. The air is buoyant and exhilarating. It is easy enough to believe the dictum of the doctors when they tell us that the air in this locality is charged with an unusual amount of ozone. Let any who are depressed with lassitude in our great cities come here, and they will soon testify to the restorative effects of Nature's choicest tonic. We walk along an irregular path with an enclosed copse on the right, while we look out on the left across the sunlit sea.

In about ten minutes we are on the splendid golf-links, not to be excelled anywhere, even on the Fifeshire coast, if Mr. Balfour and the Scotch enthusiasts will forgive me for saying so. Near by is the curious lighthouse, a most picturesque edifice, totally unlike any other beacon I have ever seen. But one of the charms of Cromer is just this, that it has patterns and styles of its own for everything, and nothing in the place or round about it is like anything to which we are elsewhere accustomed. The golf-links are on rolling downs. Nowhere is there even a small stretch of level soil. The highest portion is always the edge of the cliff, so that those who walk persistently along it enjoy a wonderful double view of both land and sea. But there are curious and even irresistible temptations to diverge. When we have come a mile and a half, without any fatigue in such invigorating air, though we have done some amount of real climbing, we feel that we must certainly turn down the road which leads from the path on the cliff to the village of Overstrand.

Here is the straggling old-world village which seems to know nothing of the new age. The modern world has not come here. Lord Battersea's grounds occupy a large slice of the parish, but they are entirely shut in from outside observation. The village has a singularly antique aspect, and it is one of the very quietest spots on earth. It is a good introduction to the Garden of Sleep to which we are on our way, for not a single inhabitant is at the moment in view. The truth is that we are at the portal of Poppyland proper, and the place appears to be plunged into a perpetual siesta. And, indeed, poppies blaze on every side. They were flaring in their brightest costume on the edge of the cliff, and they have been setting the lane on fire as we walked down to Overstrand to look at the two churches which are the curiosity of the village.

Two churches stand side by side in this churchyard. One is the old church of Overstrand. It is in ruins, but it must have been a much prettier building than the new one. Indeed, it is a lovely relic, with its fine flint battlemented tower, its nave and chancel all roofless, and its north porch and rood-turret. Overstrand, like Shipden, lost its original church when a great tract of land was carried into the sea in the fifteenth century, and this ruined St. Martin's was built in its place. The roofless church is shrouded in the soft embrace of ivy, mantling the beautiful Gothic ruin all over. It is a place to be for ever venerated for the memory of the noble and philanthropic Buxton family. In the east end of the church, which is neatly turfed, rest the remains of Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton, Bart., one of the band of Christian people who toiled for the emancipation of the slaves. Many others of the same family are buried here.

A delightful walk back over the cliff, and then over the hill on the east brings us to the Garden of Sleep. This is the spot celebrated in Mr. Clement Scott's lovely little song—

"On the grass of the cliff, at the edge of the steep
God planted a garden—a garden of sleep!
'Neath the blue of the sky, in the green of the corn,
It is there that the regal red poppies are born."

High up the country behind, and perched majestically close to the margin of the cliff, stands the solitary flint tower which belonged to the parish church of the tiny village of Sidestrand. Here is another of the many monuments of retreat of the Norfolk coast before the inexorable march of the sea. The new church of the

parish is erected half a mile back from the coast. It is constructed out of materials from the old church, only this tower being left. How pathetic is its aspect. High up in the circular tower are two windows, on opposite sides, like watchful eyes, which seem as if wistfully looking out, one over the land, the other over the ocean. There is something unspeakably suggestive and profoundly poetic in this lonely tower, fixed in this commanding position, and seeming to keep guard with sleepless eyes over the numerous graves in which rest, till the resurrection, the men and women who lived in days gone by. The old church tower stands in utter loneliness. Not a tree or bush casts a shadow near it. The dead encircle it. On a calm summer day the deep hush of this God's acre is only broken by the occasional sighing of a soft breeze over the downs, or the echoes of the rippling tide lapping the shore far below.

It is melancholy to reflect on the certain doom of this beautiful relic of the past. The sea steadily perseveres in its work of corrosion. Already the north-eastern corner of the graveyard wall has fallen into the ocean, and soon the whole of the side next the cliff will be gone. In a few years the tower will be engulfed, and the Garden of Sleep will be swallowed up.

Now we may return to Cromer by the high road, or we may walk on along the cliff to Trimmingham, and thence to Mundesley. If we turn off on to the turnpike road, we presently find ourselves close to the old mill which is one of the landmarks of Poppyland, as the tower in the Garden of Sleep is a sea-mark, left, indeed, standing at the wish of the Government for the benefit of sailors.

The old wooden mill looks as ruinous and picturesque as any artist would wish. It seems almost in danger of catching fire from the countless poppies which flame on every side. But here is the cottage which, according to a rough home-made inscription on a board, claims to be the very heart of Poppyland. It looks like it. Here Mr. Scott made his home when exploring the district. It is a sweet and romantic specimen of an English rustic little villa. Thousands of poppies hold up their banners to vindicate the claim of the cottage.

It is a moot point whether the country is the more charming on this eastern side of Cromer, or on the western side. In that direction lies Sheringham, with its matchless woods inland, and its famous race of fishermen manning its fishing-boats. The bell-shaped tents which take the place of bathing-machines, make up a very curious spectacle on the strand at Sheringham. I counted one hundred and twenty of them. One might have thought a little army of soldiers had encamped on the beautiful sands. Here again, as in any spot you may please to choose, quietude and beauty blend their supreme charms to allure the tired toiler to make his abode for a season, in scenes difficult to excel for combinations of attractiveness and for conditions of salubrity.

THE SULTAN'S SELAMLIK.

By MAY CROMMELIN.

It was a March morning in Constantinople. Before our eyes rose the domed mosque by the Yildiz Kiosk, white marble picked out with buff. Its sharp minarets were outlined like snowy needles against the pale blue sea, studded with sails and steamers. Below us the changing crowd was flecked with red fez-caps like blood-gouts. Further, the fluttering crimson pennants of lancer regiments showed like a hovering cloud of red-winged birds.

"Isn't it lovely, dad! Like a little Jubilee!" exclaimed Molly, laying her hand on my shoulder as we stood together. I rather wish she wouldn't. Molly is five feet eleven and a half, whereas I, her father, am slightly less. Molly has not long come back from Oxford, but she bears very kindly with my old-fashioned notions, and though I say it "as shouldn't," she is splendidly handsome.

"Two hours to wait," I grumbled. For the clock tower opposite showed 4.30, Turkish time. The Turks reckon from sunrise, therefore 6.30 would be noon. Now we were a large party on a personally-conducted yachting cruise, and were come to see the Sultan Abdul Hamid say his prayers this Friday.

Splendidly the Turkish soldiers swung up the red-gravelled road, lining it to the palace gates.

"Look at those ten or twelve lovely Arab horses, and the dear little boys in Hussar uniforms being lifted on them!" exclaimed Molly. "Who are they, dad?"—as if I could tell.

"Those are the young princes," said a young man beside us, eyeing Molly's sparkling black eyes and rich complexion with respectful admiration—or so I thought.

"Oh, thanks!" murmured my daughter condescendingly, glancing at the insignificant stranger.

Thinking Molly's tone unnecessarily snubbing, I observed to my neighbour, smiling cynically under my grey beard—

"Look at that dirty fellow sluicing down the horse-shoe marble steps of the mosque beside those gorgeous turkey-gobblers of pashas!"

"An Eastern touch. What galaxies of stars they wear! Those old fellows could stock a sky of their own," said the young man languidly. He and I slid into talk, and I rather liked him. He tried to interest Molly, but it was of no use.

Both crowd and excitement thickened.

Harem carriages crawled by, showing sections of pretty faces, with snowy veils, white and rose satin draperies, their running guardians in bright red uniforms. A baby prince in full Hussar attire was carried on the arm of a general, who dumped the toy soldier down on the steps, ready to salute his imperial parent.

"Look at the Ministers! There is the Grand Vizier," said my new friend, as a group of ponderous old gentlemen with swords and ribbons marched stoutly downhill.

At that moment the muezzin's call to prayer sounded in the upper air from a minaret. Rattle went the soldiers' arms and the crowd shouted. It is the Sultan. Bands crashed, muezzins chanted their long-drawn wail. Within a green satin-lined landau sat a long-nosed, narrow-faced, sad-looking Turk. He touched his forehead in greeting as a roar of welcome surged alongside him till it seemed to wash him out of the carriage on to the carpeted steps.

Alone the Sultan walks up, turns, touches his forehead once more, disappears within.

"For a sick man and a weekly festival, this is a fair amount of pomp," I observed to my new acquaintance.

"Few potentates can show more," he replied. "But what a cowardly cruel face the man has!"

"Come along, dad. Hurry up to lunch in the palace," commanded Molly. "Who is your mean-looking youth? I cold-shouldered him, for one meets such dreadful Britishers abroad. Did you notice the delightful Turkish pasha who has been talking to me? Ah, here he comes!"—and a fat pasty-faced officer in blue and gold, with a