

A. Tall Story

One of the most prominent physical features of West Penwith is the deep valley extending from Crowlas north-west to Nancledra and Towednack, with a short continuation over the watershed to River Cove. Near its northern end this valley forms a very pronounced pass between Rosewall and Trendrine Hills ; this gap in the otherwise unbroken range of " High Country " hills is especially conspicuous from the sea, and it need not surprise us that St. Ives fishermen know (or knew) it as " The Open Gate." What is surprising is to read in *From St. Ives to Land's End*, A. G. Folliott-Stokes, *Days in Cornwall*, C. Lewis Hind, and *The Climbers' Guide to Cornwall*, A. W. Andrews, that fishermen at sea off the north coast can through the Open Gate see the horizon of the southern sea—the second book mentioned even specifies the required offing as three leagues. This is a physical impossibility, for the ground at Towednack Church, where the valley crosses the watershed between the two hills, is not less than 500 feet above sea level. One can imagine this tall story being told to gullible visitors at the turn of the century, but it is remarkable that it has been solemnly printed at least three times, and seems hitherto to have passed unchallenged. P.A.S.P.