

THE SIMPLE LIFE.

HOW TO LIVE ON FIVE SHILLINGS A WEEK.

Carbis Bay is close to St. Ives, plump in the centre of a panorama of glorious scenery which some have called the "Cornish Riviera." As such it was the habitat chosen by Miss N. G. Bacon for a remarkable and successful experiment in the "simple life" which she describes in the "World's Work and Play":—

"My move was to choose my Cornish cottage, for which I pay £6 per year rent, including a garden of no small pretensions from a Londoner's point of view. Just off the main road, with its picturesque entrance lane facing the village shop, the last of a row of four on a terrace, my tiny cot is to be discovered hidden in its obscurity.

"The Cornish summer season is very short, consisting only of some six to seven weeks, counting principally the August month, when high prices are asked for rooms, and the people who get their 'living' by letting their houses and cottages generally demand a six-weeks' let, as it is only by doing this they are enabled to keep the wolf from the door throughout the year."

Thus the economic problem of how to live the simple life in Cornwall on two half-crowns a week started with the writer's possession of a four-roomed cottage, with a spare bedroom:—

"I advertised for someone to take my spare room for 5s. per week rent, with the use of the sitting-room, kitchen, and garden, without attendance.

"A lady from Australia came along, then a Londoner, and for weeks together we worked out the problem, and with economy and management proved that it is possible for educated people to live well on so small a sum, and yet to be comfortable and happy."

The question of attendance is not a difficult one, for "day girls" can be secured at from 3s. to 5s. a week. But this would have interfered with the cost of the experiment:—

"With a well-stocked vegetable garden, and with fish at low prices—for St. Ives is a fishing centre, and pilchards as large as fresh herrings can be bought at from three to four a penny, while other fish of varied sorts can be purchased most reasonably, milk being 3d. per quart, and eggs from 9d. per dozen—living is cheap, and a good dietary with management can be arranged with fish, fruit, and vegetables, etc."

Her experiments with various "paying guests" proved that it was possible to have four meals daily for five shillings a week:—

"Taking a few days at random our dietary consisted of as follows:—Bacon, bread and butter, tea or coffee for breakfast; fried bream and potatoes, bread and butter pudding for dinner; cakes and biscuits for tea; grilled pilchard, bread and butter, and rice pudding for supper.

"Dinners varied, with vegetable omelette, cabbage and fried potatoes, black currant pie; haricot roast, green peas and potatoes, tapioca pudding; and supper also varied, with cheese and salad, and jam tart; fried fish and semolina or rice pudding, etc."

For ten months of the year beauty spots such as that selected by Miss Bacon are abandoned. For the remaining two house rent is inevitably exorbitant. The solution of the simple puzzle is surely to take a cottage by the year.