

children had gone by the regular coach-route to Dolbadarn, and I had crossed the mountain by a wild foot-track, promising to join them that night at Dolbadarn in time for dinner; for I had intended to take the coach at Abermaw, which would have brought me to the end of my journey in good time. This coach, however, I had missed by just five minutes. My walk that day had been a long one, and I was rather fagged, and should probably have hired a conveyance for the remainder of the distance: but the manner of the landlord of the hotel was so abrupt, and, as I thought, offensive, in answer to my inquiries, that I resolved, come what might, he should not be a sixpence the richer for me.

I walked on till I came to a little public-house at the further end of the town, close to the rough quay that bordered the estuary, and turned in there for a glass of beer and a crust of bread and cheese, as well as for the purpose of making a few inquiries as to my route.

'Well, indeed,' said Evan Rowlands the landlord, 'there's no possible way to get to Dolbadarn to-night, not unless you take a car from Mr. Chone.'

'I shan't have a car from Mr. Jones,' I said. 'Can't I hire one anywhere else.'

Evan shook his head; there was no horse or car in Abermaw except the horses and cars owned by Mr. Jones.

'Very well then,' I said I would walk.

'Not possible,' said Evan, 'it's more than ten miles.'

'I wouldn't mind the distance, only I've walked five-and-twenty miles already.'

'Dear me!' said Evan; 'you're very strong.'

'Can't I get a boat part of the way?' I suggested. Evan put his head out at the door. 'No!' he cried; 'the tide has just turned; it is running down very strong.'

'Then there is nothing for it but walking,' I said; 'I must go round by Llanfair Bridge.' But I didn't like the idea of this ten miles walk through the mist and gathering gloom.

'Stop!' said Evan. 'Why shouldn't you go over the bridge—the railway bridge?'

'Is the bridge passable then? Can you get across?'

'O dear, yes. The gentlemen from the railway come over very often, and to-day Hugh Pugh and David Morris did come over from the Dolbrith Quarry.'

'And what distance will that save me?'

'Four or five miles; yes, sure.'

'And the bridge is quite safe?'

'Oh, it is very strong and safe indeed; or how should Hugh Pugh and David Morris come over, and the railway gentlemen too; yes sure.'

'And the railway people won't object to my going over?'

'They've all knocked off work for the day, and there won't be a soul near the bridge but yourself.'

'Then of course I'll go over it.'

But I found that there were certain difficulties in the way. The railway bridge crossed the estuary at a point about a quarter of a mile from the little inn that formed the extremity of the town, at a spot where its channel was narrowed to a distance of about three quarters of a mile. The unfinished bridge was constructed of piles firmly driven into the bed of the river, from which rose high piers of timber to the height of about forty feet. Along these were massive balks, destined to