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### A BROKEN BRIDGE.

I reached the little Welsh town of Abermaw one boisterous afternoon in autumn at about four o'clock, after a long tramp over the mountains. Abermaw, as its name implies, is situated at the mouth of the river Maw, which here forms an estuary about a mile broad. The town itself faces the open sea; the harbour lies about half a mile up the estuary; whilst between the town and the harbour was the outline of a huge bridge then in course of construction. Abermaw is a little bit of a place, consisting of an hotel, a few shops, a church, a chapel of ease, and half-a-dozen lodging houses, which are built on a platform of sand, the work of the sea and river in concert or in conflict. The old fishing village is perched upon the rocks above, tier upon tier, the lintel-stone of one house looking down the chimney of the house below, and is reached by rude rocky steps, where the children of the village swarm up and down, and yet rarely contrive to break their necks.

The further shore of the estuary was a triangular spit of sand, across which was a track that joined the high road at a point where it commenced to mount the shoulder of a wave-beaten cliff on the face of which it was terraced; for on the further or southern side of the estuary the sea washed up to the very base of the rocks that formed the rugged fringe of this iron-bound coast. There was a ferry from the Abermaw side to the spit of sand, and thence, by a detour of several miles, you could make your way along the southern bank of the river to the town of Dolbadarn. As the crow flies, Dolbadarn was not more than seven miles distant from Abermaw, but it could not be reached by any practicable track in less than from ten to eleven miles; for the river took a wide sweep to the north, and in addition to the detour thus caused, the first bridge where the road crossed the river was at a point a good way wide of Dolbadarn, so that, altogether, the distance was lengthened to that above mentioned. On the other hand, if you crossed the ferry, and made your way across the sand to the highway, the distance was much the same, and this latter route was of course only practicable to foot passengers.

Although I had reached Abermaw in the guise of a free and independent pedestrian, yet my liberty was of a restricted nature. My wife and