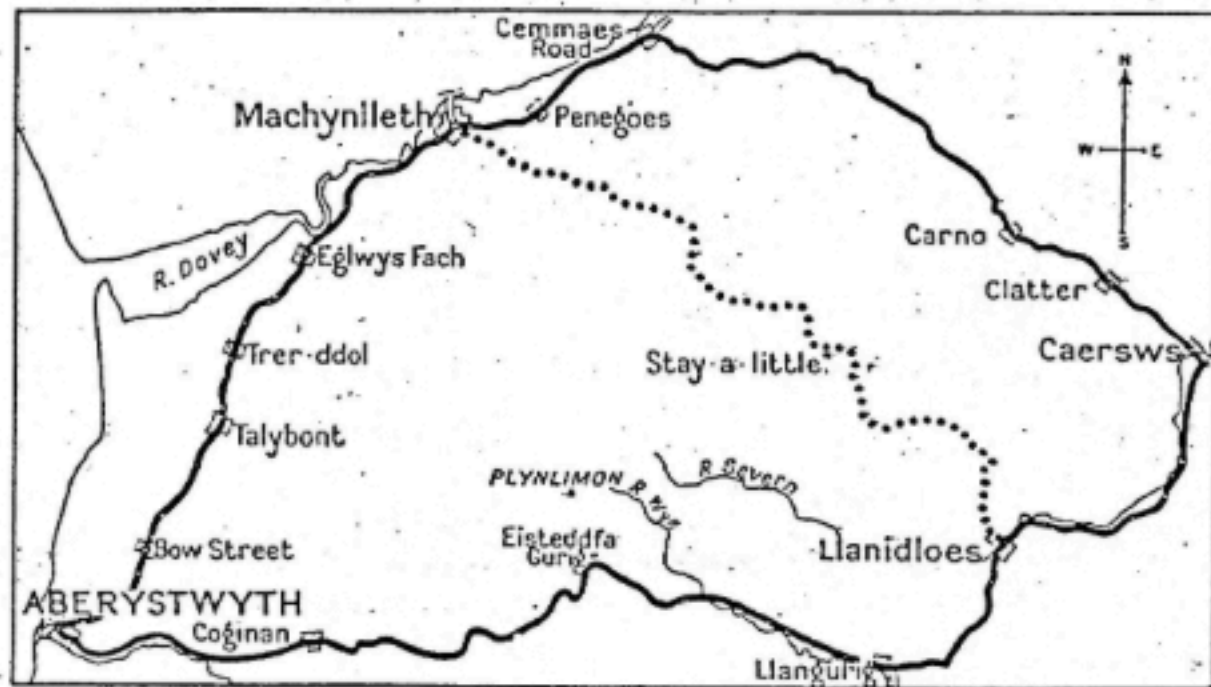


THE UNMOTORABLE ROAD



THE signpost said, "Unmotorable Road." May its timbers shiver for perpetrating such a lie. If your car suffers from apoplexy and your gears grind their teeth at the sight of a hill, then, perhaps, you might term it so yourself. But the hills are not so steep that you wonder when you are going to loop-the-loop, nor is the surface so bad that you feel like a fly on an unshaven chin. No; cars in reasonably good fettle will find it definitely motorable, and it is worth taking in preference to the main road—that is, if you have the right spirit.

If you have ever motored in mid-Wales you may have come upon that charming little town Llanidloes; it is mid-way between Aberystwyth and Welshpool. There you will find the offending signpost. Every map and every motoring guide will tell you that in going from Llanidloes to Machynlleth you must take the road through Caersws, a distance of some 31 miles. By the so-called unmotorable road the distance is only 18

How Those in Search of Adventure May Achieve the Impossible

miles, and here let me advise you to take it.

For once, ignore all the authorities and prepare to enjoy an exhilarating drive. The road branches off by the bridge over the infant Severn, and straight away begins to climb; but don't let that worry you, there are worse hills by far in Cornwall. In justice to the road, I beg of you to halt frequently to admire the scenery. You may have seen grander views in North Wales, but if you like green, rounded hills that send the river doubling back on itself in a broad smile you will be well content.

In a few miles the scenery changes, for away on the left the dreary, boggy expanses of Plynlimon rise up to the skyline. At lonely Stay-

Little, which is not quite inviting enough to tempt you to accept the invitation, you turn left and the road soon begins to run into the mountains, which are literally clothed in shaggy sheep. On few roads in Wales will you come nearer to the solemn splendour and majesty of the country. The illusion, reality rather, that the country is ageless is elsewhere spoilt by a string of cars upon the road. Here, thanks to the signpost, yours will be the only car.

You will feel lonely, you will perhaps shiver, particularly if the mist drives down from the mountain tops. You may hurry down to Machynlleth, but you will never regret that you have done the impossible—motored over the unmotorable road—for you will have seen Wales as only those who get up terribly early see it. By the way, if you want actual proof that the road will not wreck your car, let me tell you that an ancient bus travels over part of it every other day!

W.R.B.