

THE LOST WORLD

BY SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE

Creator of Sherlock Holmes

SYNOPSIS OF PRECEDING CHAPTERS

EDWARD D. MALONE, a reporter on "The London Courier," was told by his sweetheart, Gladys Hunger-ton, that she desired above all things to marry a man of deeds, one that would take a prominent part in setting the world afire, and she would have nothing to do with him sentimentally till he had become such an individual. In despair he went to old McArdle, news editor of his paper, and asked for a special mission that would enable him to distinguish himself. He was finally given the assignment to interview Professor George Edward Challenger, a famous scientist who had returned from South America two years previously with the announcement that he had discovered some prehistoric monsters, and in fact showed alleged photographs of them. His statements were received with derision by the entire scientific world; and the professor, who possessed an exceedingly belligerent disposition, refused to have anything more to do with his fellow scientists and physically assaulted anybody that attempted to question him about his South American trip. However, Malone was brave, and set about arranging for the interview.

CHAPTER III.

"He Is a Perfectly Impossible Person."

MY friend's fear or hope was not destined to be realized. When I called on Wednesday there was a letter waiting with the West Kensington postmark upon it and my name scrawled across the envelop in a handwriting which looked like a barbed wire railing. The contents were as follows:

Enmore Park, W.

SIR.—I have duly received your note in which you claim to refute my views; although I am not aware that they are dependent upon indorsement either from you or from anyone else. You have ventured to use the word "speculation" with regard to my statement upon the subject of Dinosaurism, and I would call your attention to the fact that such a word in such a connection is offensive to a degree. The context convinces me, however, that you have misused rather through ignorance and tactlessness than through malice; so I am content to pass the matter by. You quote an isolated sentence from my lecture, and appear to it some difficulty in understanding it. I should have thought that only a subhuman intelligence could have failed to grasp the point; but, if it really needs amplification, I shall be glad to see you at the hour named, though visits and interviews of every sort are exceedingly distasteful to me. As to your suggestion that I may modify my opinion, I would have you to know that it is not my habit to do so, after a definite expression of my mature views. You will kindly show the envelop of this letter to my man, Austin, who will call, as he has to take every precaution to shield me from the intrusive rascals who call themselves journalists. Yours faithfully,

GEORGE EDWARD CHALLENGER.

This was the letter that I read aloud to Tarp Henry, who had come down early to hear the result of my venture.

His only remark was, "There's some new stuff, bruzicura or something, which is better than arnica."

Some people have such extraordinary notions of humor.

IT was nearly half-past ten before I had received my message; but a taxicab took me round in good time for my appointment. It was an imposing porticoed house at which we stopped, and the heavily curtained windows gave every indication of wealth upon the part of this formidable professor. The door was opened by an odd, swarthy, dried-up person of uncertain age, with a dark pilot jacket and brown leather gaiters. I found afterward that he was the chauffeur who filled the gaps left by a succession of fugitive butlers. He looked me up and down with a searching light blue eye.

"Expected?" he asked.

"An appointment."

"Got your letter?"



We Did a Catharine Wheel Together Down the Passage.

Drawings by Joseph Clement Coll

I produced the envelop.

"Right!" He seemed to be a person of few words.

Following him down the passage, I was suddenly interrupted by a small woman who stepped out from what proved to be the dining room door. She was a bright, vivacious, dark eyed lady, more French than English in her type.

"One moment," she said. "You can wait, Austin. Step in here, Sir. May I ask if you have met my husband before?"

"No, Madam, I have not had the honor."

"Then I apologize to you in advance. I must tell you that he is a perfectly impossible person—absolutely impossible! If you are forewarned, you will be the more ready to make allowances."

"It is most considerate of you, Madam."

"Get quickly out of the room if he seems inclined to be violent. Don't wait to argue with him. Several people have been injured through doing that. Afterward there is a public scandal, and it