

CHAPTER 10

WHEN WE RETURNED TO ENGLAND, WE WERE ASKED TO talk about our experiences at a meeting at the Zoological Institute. The meeting was scheduled for 7 November, the day after we got back from South America. When we arrived at the hall, we were surprised to find it packed with journalists, scientists and members of the public.

At seven o'clock, the Duke of Durham stepped on to the stage and addressed the crowd. 'Good evening everyone. I'm sure you are all very eager to hear about the expedition to South America. Professor Summerlee will now tell us about the group's adventures in the Amazon.'

Professor Summerlee stood up and the audience applauded enthusiastically.

'I would like to begin by apologising to Professor Challenger for doubting his word,' began Summerlee. 'Professor Challenger is a brave and gifted scientist, and we all owe him an apology for calling him a liar.'

The professor then went on to describe the horrors and attractions of the lost world: he talked about the journey to the cliffs; the loss of our bridge; and the new species of plants and animals we discovered. Of course, he also talked about the dinosaurs, the Indians and the battle with the apemen.

The audience gasped, but not everyone believed the story. Dr James Illingworth, a well-known scientist, raised his hand. 'Professor,' he said, 'we've heard your remarkable story, but do you have any proof?' Summerlee shook his head. 'Our cameras and film were destroyed by the apemen when they attacked our camp. But we do have some insect specimens that we found on the plateau.'

'You could have found those anywhere,' said Dr Illingworth. Professor Challenger stood up. 'We do have some pictures,' he said. 'One of them is of a pterodactyl.'

Dr Illingworth shook his head. 'A picture isn't enough to convince me,' he said.

'So you want to see the real thing?' asked Challenger. 'Yes, I do,' said Dr Illingworth.

