

flicting French and Arab claims, until a prominent Arab Nationalist advised the British government that if the inland Syrian towns of Damascus, Homs, Hama and Aleppo were expressly included in the guaranteed area of Arab independence, the Arabs would probably leave the destiny of the Syrian coast in suspense until after the war. Accordingly, the British High Commissioner in Egypt, through whom the negotiations with King Hussein were being conducted, was instructed to promise Arab independence within the area mentioned by the King, with the exception of Cilicia and of the territory west of the four districts of Damascus, Homs, Hama and Aleppo. In reply to this, King Hussein undertook to revolt against Turkey on these terms, with the warning that he would fight the French for the liberty of the Syrian coast after the conclusion of the war.

In this transaction two points deserve notice. In the first place, no Zionist claim to Palestine was yet in question, and the formula agreed upon arose purely out of a conflict between Arab claims and those of France in Syria. In the second place, while Palestine was not mentioned by name, any more than were Syria, Hijaz, Yemen or other individual provinces, it was included in the boundaries of the area laid down by Hussein—the western boundaries of which were the Red Sea, the Egyptian frontier in Sinai and the Mediterranean coast up to and including Alexandretta and even Messina—and was therefore included in the British promise, unless expressly excepted. Since it was not excepted by name, it could only be so as forming part of the territory lying west of the four districts specified, and the British government has therefore taken great pains to prove that it does in fact form part of them. On this point, however, the Palestine Arab Delegation have undoubtedly got the best of the argument.

The British government points out that the former Turkish "Vilayet (Province) of Shams," of which Damascus was the administrative centre, stretched southward, east of Jordan, parallel with the whole length of Palestine; and it argues that since Palestine undoubtedly lies west of this southern salient of the Vilayet of Shams, it falls under "territory west of the district of Damascus" as specified in the limiting clause of their commitment to Hussein. To this plea, however, the Arabs have returned two conclusive answers: (1) that the British High Commissioner did not write "Vilayet of Shams" but "district of Damascus"; and (2) that he cannot have intended, in this phrase, to refer to the whole Ottoman province, since he mentioned, side by side with the district of Damascus, the districts of Hama and Homs—for Hama and Homs, as well as Damascus, were

parts of the Shams Vilayet, and if "district" had meant "Vilayet" and "Damascus" "Shams," then Hama and Homs would not have been mentioned separately. The former of these points has since been admitted by Mr. Churchill. In a second draft of his memorandum, in which the words of the original promise to King Hussein had been quoted—the only fragment of that correspondence which has yet been published officially—the word "Vilayet" was tacitly changed to "district" of Damascus, in accordance with the Arab Delegation's contention. The upshot is that Palestine was *not* excepted from the area in which the British government promised in 1915 to recognize and uphold Arab independence, and that the Balfour Declaration of 1917 was therefore incompatible with a previous commitment. To saddle his country with irreconcilable commitments is almost the worst crime of which the professional diplomatist is capable, for it compromises that country's reputation for straight-dealing. However, the blunders of a nation's servants can generally be repaired by the nation itself, if it has the courage and patience to take the situation in hand. Certainly the mandatory power in Palestine is placed, by its equivocal diplomatic position, under an extra obligation to carry through to a successful conclusion its very difficult and thankless task; and, by equity and common sense, the substantial interests, though not the legal claims, of the Arabs and the Jews can perhaps still be adjusted. But the diplomatic background certainly aggravates the difficulty of the Palestine mandate to a formidable degree.

ARNOLD J. TOYNBEE.

## Megalosaurus

A monster like a mountain, leathern-limbed,  
With eyes of sluggish ore and claws of stone,  
He heaved his thunder-throated body, rimmed  
By marsh-fires human eyes have never known.  
A monolith carved out of savage night,  
He hid in his impenetrable hide  
Muscle and blood and nerves to sense delight  
And agony that tore him when he died.

The clumsy terror of his frame has gone  
The way of his blind, simple savagery.  
Out of his casual bones men build the dawn  
That bore and bred such brutish game as he.  
But still endures his dull, confounding shape:  
In wars of the wise offspring of the ape.

BABETTE DEUTSCH.

# A Tired Radical

**W**HEN Mrs. Aronson came in today I was at the information desk—my post in the library in a foreign quarter. A book was her objective and we took the usual devious conversational detour to find it.

"That Main Street, now. Is it still so popular? Ach, it is a dreary book. Twice have I looked at it and turned away. But if all the world has read it, then so must I. But he's not lively like that Harry Johnston now. Ach, that book—the Happy-Dombeys! Such wit, such fun! He keeps me awake the whole evening through. No, Main Street I shall save for a while yet. What other good novel is there, dearie?"

"May Sinclair's last one?"

"Sinclair? Ach, I read *The Jungle*. Such a book! For five years after would I not go near a delicatessen. You mean yet another Sinclair?"

Mrs. Aronson now has her thrills vicariously "by books," for she has renounced the combats that made her famous on our East Side and has become a tired radical. Books have no damaging effect upon her husband's sales in his small drygoods shop on Hester Street, as had her previous adventures. There are the children, too, to be considered. What can they do with a mama continually on the rampage?

When I met Mrs. Aronson she was at the height of her power. If Mrs. Aronson had lived in England she might have been another Mrs. Pankhurst. If she had lived in the Middle West, she would have been leader of the Thanatopsis Club and would have given it reality and ardor. Since her American life was spent in New York's lower East Side, economic rather than political or literary issues of the day naturally called for her championing.

I met her before the war, or before America's entry. Our encounter was not in the library, for in the days before Mrs. Aronson became rich and weary, she did not frequent our place. Mrs. Aronson spoke on a nearby street corner almost every evening, and we chanced to meet after one of her gatherings.

She had a large following, and an excitable one, and she organized the mothers of the East Side as they have not been organized before or since. She led them in a bread riot that brought newspaper headlines and more tangible results. She harangued the crowd at City Hall to the intense discomfiture of city officials and a police force that found it difficult to deal lightly, and at the same

time effectively, with women who had the sympathy of the crowd. Her massive honest face, surmounted by natural coarse black hair—she radically declined the stitched wig of her orthodox contemporaries as well as the hat of the conventionally Americanized—carried a conviction of her sincerity.

Mrs. Aronson was neighborly enough in the morning. She was not one to hold back a bit of flour that the family next door needed. Nor could she resist an invitation to squeeze a neighbor's newly purchased fish and pass upon its tenderness.

At or during or directly after the noon dinner—only a discreet and troubled Mr. Aronson could have told the exact hour of the metamorphosis—Mrs. Aronson put aside the rôle of housewife and became the leader. Frequently she repaired with her followers to the stuffy room of the Pants-makers' Union and discussed in shrill Yiddish or broken English the profiteers, the high cost of living, the increase in rent. When the drafted men were sent away it was Mrs. Aronson who led the lamentations before the office of the local board. Although her own son was too young to be taken, Mrs. Aronson's cries were the loudest that fell upon the ears of the uneasy policeman stationed there to prevent trouble.

When food restrictions were passed Mrs. Aronson was first to denounce the use of cornmeal and rice as substitutes for flour, and the further limitations placed upon cooking. Mr. Aronson, had he not been docile and unquestioning, might have put his tongue in his cheek. His wife's outside duties and preoccupations curbed her cooking activities without governmental regulations. There were several brushes with the police when Mrs. Aronson and her crowd swooped upon a small grocer or pushcart man and demanded lower prices. Yet her utmost defiance could not add a jail sentence to her achievements. The magistrate warily refused the crown of martyrdom, contenting himself, if not Mrs. Aronson, with a warning. The city had all it could do with the war on its hands without making martyrs.

"Go slow with the women," the police were warned. "The time's too tense to let 'em have hysterics and get 'emselves abused. Jolly 'em along and don't take 'em too seriously."

The police thereafter let Mrs. Aronson talk, listened politely, kept the crowd from blocking traffic—and that was all.

Then came the great onion coup. Someone cor-