

she is, beautiful and white with the large blue hole in the middle, that lovely canopy!—Now I ease on to my strap, arms up, catch hold of the lift-webs, espy No. 1 floating down over there. Funny how fast he is moving when I feel stationary. I yell to him: 'Are you O.K., No. 1?' He yells back: 'O.K., and you?' and then we stop chatting. Complete confidence in my harness, but my hat, how No. 1 is travelling! I take another 'shufti' at the ground and discover that I too am speeding down—my Christ, I am! The earth's approaching, and at some pace! What's that someone is yelling? 'Elbows in, No. 2, head down; now watch it! . . . Left side landing—head in—You're O.K. now, No. 2, relax!' and crash! the deck—perfect landing on the plough, a turn to the left on my quick-release box, a sharp smack on its lid—the harness falls apart. I am up in a jiffy—'Knees bend!'—Nothing strained, broken or torn. A grand feeling to be back on Mother Earth! Round to the top of the parachute, pull in the silk, roll it up, plait the lines, pack the lot and now the worst of all: the walk back through the fields to the waiting lorries, carrying the ruddy bundle.

Quick drive back to home aerodrome, new 'chutes, emplane. This time I am No. 1 and no Instructor to go out first. 'Action Stations . . . OUT!' Out with a much mightier pull and my eyes open. I did two complete somersaults and saw ground, sky, ground from every conceivable angle. I was much better able to take stock of my feelings during the second exit, and thought that the 'chute was longer still in opening than the first time. In actual fact not more than a second and a half to two seconds goes by before you become airborne.

. . . Unable to finish this for the time being. Course successfully completed. No injuries.

DIANA WITHERBY

## NO BREAKING POINT

As John Stuart lay on his bed and afternoon sleep slowly fell, it seemed like a shutter separating his past from his present, and childhood became so remote as to belong to a previous life. Before he lost consciousness his mind clicked without control

to places and sensations he had forgotten, but which he recognized as echoes of other drowsy summer afternoons of his life. Dandelion parachutes floating into the sky, mauve flowers on cliff grass, white silent Mediterranean alleys, each in turn enveloped him, but with an enchantment which differed from the original as a painting differs from its subject.

He woke up to see his wife fumbling about in a drawer. She always interrupted him whenever he became free of her. No sooner did he begin to write a letter or read a book than her uneasiness would get the better of her and she would ask him questions; and never upon a trivial subject, so that even when he had answered her she had imposed upon him some anxiety which prevented him from losing himself again.

'What are you looking for?' he asked.

'Oh, darling, I am sorry, I didn't mean to wake you up. I'm looking for that policy, it must get there tomorrow.' She had picked on the one thing that was urgent and that he should have seen to himself.

'I'm going to send it off later,' he said carefully, he always felt so irritable on waking that he had an automatic careful voice which he used until he felt calmer.

'I didn't want to disturb you, and the post goes in ten minutes.'

When she left the room he stared at the photograph of her brother, Thomas, taken at the bottom of the mountain which they had climbed together, and from which Thomas had fallen hundreds of feet to die. It still seemed so extraordinary to him that she was not her brother, and that however much he imagined Thomas was going to come into the room, it was in fact always Cynthia.

During the two years of their marriage she had changed so much that now she only reminded him of Thomas physically, whereas before her manner and character had resembled his too. Where had her complacent shrewishness come from? Simply from being Mrs. Stuart instead of Miss Bourne? 'The little man at the grocer's is my *greatest* friend. We have such long conversations I have to *tear* myself away.' She did not even give him a background of maternal calm in her assurance, and the strong opinions she had developed upon everything had only a bad memory and ignorance with which to back them up. He watched her out of the window walking down the field to the pillar-box.

She must have hurried, to give him no time to send off the policy himself.

He went along the passage to talk to David, the younger brother of Cynthia, who lived with them; at least there was no family resemblance between this dark monkey-faced boy and Thomas to give him the sense of frustration he experienced with Cynthia.

Through the shut bedroom door he heard David's voice, threatening and loud. 'If you don't get into bed immediately, Foster, I shall beat you!'

'What on earth are you talking about?' said John, opening the door.

'I thought you were out', David was standing in front of the mirror, 'I have to be a dormitory captain next term—I was practising.'

'Ah—' said John, 'Well, see you later.' What was the good of talking to an adolescent. All David's strongest emotions were not experienced in his home, but at school, where he spent three-quarters of the year.

Before John was out of earshot, David, in an attempt to lend normality to his behaviour, continued his commands. 'And if you think I can't see that book, Glaton, you're very much mistaken. Hand it over!' But when the footsteps were no longer to be heard he began to dance about, scarlet in the face. 'Bloody! Bloody! Bloody!' he cried, 'Bursting in like that. I have to knock when I go into their bedroom, why don't they knock when they come into mine?'

Cynthia pushed her feet through the dark rust brambles; overhanging the path they were damp and dripping though the fields were dry. She watched her feet, large and yet stubby, and felt the twinge of despair she always suffered about her appearance, a twinge, however, which came from the centre of many different layers of feeling, aggressiveness, resignation, affection. Since her mother had died her own ugliness had contracted her spirit and also her face to a cautious sharpness, but though she could compare her looks with others and realize that she was ugly where they might be beautiful, nevertheless she recognized this fact with her mind alone. All she needed was one other person to confirm her own affection for her looks, and when John had not only unexpectedly married her but also seemed fond

of her appearance, and excitement had swept away her doubts, she had expanded and felt free. Then he had gradually become indifferent and now was almost hostile. No, he is not hostile, he loves me. Tonight the Beamishes are coming to dinner—they come in, they see what he sees in me—‘Have a drink my dears!’ They are smiling at me, we are discussing the farmer Lawrence, ‘A horrible foxy man, my dear, he looks as though feathers were sticking out of the corner of his mouth.’ ‘John, your wife becomes more penetrating every day; how do you put up with it?’ Admiring smiles—

She was back in the house and the library door was shut. John was working and she must not disturb him. He was writing an article about Thomas for a geographical magazine.

‘It is fatal making decisions when one is tired or unhappy,’ John was saying to the Beamishes, sitting pink-faced and un-subtle at the dinner table. ‘Fatigue poisons and irritates desires and makes people crave security as illness makes one crave a bed.’

‘I don’t see why security should be so unhealthy, or that needing it should only be a symptom of disease,’ said Cynthia. They never quarrelled in private, but in public, by referring to ‘people’ who did this or that, they expressed the grievances they felt against each other.

‘What people think is security when they are ill merely becomes responsibility when they are well,’ continued John.

‘But one mustn’t shirk responsibility, must one, John?’ said Mrs. Beamish, a sensitive, extremely stupid woman.

‘That wasn’t my point,’ replied John fretfully, ‘Why on earth should one create responsibility in order that one should not shirk it?’

Cynthia’s throat and mouth had become so constricted that she could neither eat nor swallow. She smiled. ‘I think that anything worth having entails a certain amount of responsibility.’

‘How’s the cricket, David?’ asked Mr. Beamish.

‘Not too bad,’ answered David. Bats, blanched pads, oil.

‘I had the most unpleasant encounter with that farmer Lawrence, he reminds me—’ began Cynthia.

‘Responsibility!’ interrupted John, ‘What a word! Invented for the old of all ages. Support some all your life for no good reason, be a little more smug, a little less free, and say you are fulfilling responsibilities!’

Will he never stop? Usually inarticulate he is hysterical when his words begin to flow, all the accumulated bits of his emotions pour out unsorted. He is telling me he hates me and in front of the Beamishes. In front of the Beamishes. He does not love me.

She smiled again. 'Oh John, surely you are exaggerating. You can't expect to skim the cream off everything.'

He ignored her. 'When one is climbing a mountain or in tremendous physical danger one does not feel responsible to anyone. The moment after one might have been killed not only leaves one shaking and exhilarated in one's body but also one's mind. One has done enough. And of course if one has shared that experience with another man, as well as the simple straightforward side of it all, and he dies' John's stare became glassy 'he can never be replaced.'

The Beamishes began to prick with embarrassment. They knew how the death of Thomas had shattered John, they felt great sympathy for him, but they did not expect him to talk about it. Grief and sympathy were emotions one implied, a word or a silence here and there, but John had gone far enough, and by threatening to enlarge on his sorrow was going to remind them of their own chasms of unhappiness which they spent most of their lives trying not to think about.

'And when that other person has gone it almost seems as though one has lost the experience because they alone shared it,' said Cynthia in a solemn, wistful voice.

She had swung the focus on to herself. John looked at her with a pang of pity. After all Thomas was her brother, he did not want to upset her by reminding her of his death. So much of their marriage was based on that loss and it remained as a mutual emotion between them which was not criticized and which had some dignity.

Cynthia did not allow the silence to become too uncomfortable. 'We have an advance copy of John's book about the High Pamirs for you,' she continued in the same solemn way; a pause, then with more animation, 'They arrived yesterday, it was most exciting.'

'What sort of book-jacket are you having?' asked Mrs. Beamish. Safely back on the ladder! They descended rung by rung and John scarcely spoke at all.

Later on in the bedroom he continued to be silent, but Cynthia

was arguing in her mind with such intensity as to be almost unaware that no words were being spoken.

'I got so depressed at dinner,' she said eventually.

'Did you?' he answered, 'Why?'

'It was so awful the way you said in front of them that I was such a responsibility to you.' The sentence, repeated in her imagination the whole evening sounded unnatural, like one of an actress too quick on a cue.

'I didn't say that. I was discussing responsibility in the abstract.'

'You weren't, you were talking about me.'

'It wasn't you in particular I was thinking of. Though perhaps I am a person who oughtn't to have anyone to look after.'

'You surely don't think you look after me do you? I have to do everything, both for you and myself.'

He did not answer, and his shut mouth exasperated her as it was obviously intended to be a criticism of her remark. Doubtful herself as to the truth of it she continued in a louder voice.

'Everything! There are only about two things in the day I ask you to do, and in the end I always have to do them myself.' As she spoke she took off her stocking and she saw him look at her short thick leg, and then look away quickly, but it was not a deliberate insult, merely an unconscious one. An intense misery made her hysterical.

'If only mother hadn't died she'd have told you what she thought of you! She'd have told you—' her voice cracked.

'Now Cynthia—darling—what are you talking about? Don't be upset, I'm not as bad as all that! It was that silly woman Hilda Beamish who annoyed me. She made out that time should be spent doing things one doesn't want to, just so that one shouldn't be called a shirker.'

'And don't you want to spend your time with me?'

'But I wasn't talking about spending my time with you, I was talking about Hilda Beamish!'

In spite of the fact that his outburst at dinner had represented a crisis he was determined not to go on with it now, he was too tired. All he wanted to do was to take off his clothes and get into bed. She watched him undress and saw that his argument with her was an accompaniment of his actions, instead of his actions being automatic while his mind ought to have been

overcome by her sadness. At the back of her mind was a memory of the grey, churning hangover she would suffer if she abandoned herself to hysteria, and she controlled herself. He was so quickly asleep that her feeling of injury did not even have time to die down before it was again stimulated by his indifference.

‘ . . . John must find us such dull cowardly people, against his own amazing standards of courage,’ Cynthia was reading the letter before she had drunk any coffee and the day seemed insurmountable, ‘but we would love to see you again, so please . . .’

David, always in high spirits at breakfast, burst into giggles over a letter that he was reading, written in a tiny irregular handwriting.

‘What does Toby say?’ asked Cynthia.

‘Oh nothing much. He’s in Switzerland.’ David immediately assumed a dead-pan expression.

‘So I noticed from the stamp, is he enjoying it?’

‘I think so,’ answered David casually. Why should everyone poke into who was writing to him and where they were writing from?

‘You must have him to stay again,’ said Cynthia. It really is impossible to take an interest in David’s life, he rebuffs any friendly question. Her mind and emotions became clearer and she wondered how she could have made such a fuss the night before, and regretted having felt released and defiant for a few hours, because it had made her say too much. Darling John how stupid he must have thought me, how hysterical. He comes in. ‘I say, I am so sorry darling please forgive me’—‘I didn’t mean what I said about not looking after you darling. I shall look after you for ever’—‘Why should you? Why should anyone look after anyone else?’ ‘It is wonderful of you to say that, not many women would, all the same I *shall* look after you.’

Upstairs John was dressing, having deliberately remained half asleep until she was out of the room. He looked out of the window and saw that the sky behind the tree outside was a purple black from recent rain, but a momentary sun shone on the front of the tree so that each leaf, twig and bough was radiant and glittering on one side and dark on the other. There was no movement and no sound except for an occasional dripping, each drop seeming to fall slowly, lit by the sun against the cloud. His mind, which had become more heavy-lidded as each year went

by, was suddenly pierced, and he felt a mixture of exhilaration and peace, and in the last degree melancholy and isolation. A moment of excitement forced on him by an external beauty which stimulated a desire for creativeness—what could it do except make his path of perpetual retreat more bitter?

He went into the dining-room where Cynthia was sitting alone. She waited until he had drunk some coffee.

'I'm afraid I was ghastly last night darling,' she said. 'Do forgive me, I can't think what I was talking about.'

'Oh, what does it matter?' he answered. He looked so detached and uninterested that she felt the slavish desperation of those in love who can make no impression on the beloved. In fact he did feel a serene superiority which lingered from having been moved by the beauty of the tree, and was temporarily contemptuous of petty half-hearted emotions. But it did not last long. Soon he felt the worries and impulses, which he must give way to rather than analyse, pressing at him.

'I think I shall go to London tomorrow,' he announced after a long silence.

'Tomorrow! Why?' asked Cynthia in a terrified voice. It *had* been a crisis, he was going away!

'Well, now that the book is out I think I ought to get a job.'

'A job! What sort of job?'

'I haven't yet decided, but it shouldn't be difficult. I was offered several after I rowed for Cambridge.'

Cynthia laughed. 'Were you? What sort of jobs are you qualified for if you can row?'

'They often offer jobs to the rowing blues,' he replied stiffly.

'Of course, darling,' she said quickly, 'of course. A very good idea if they want the right sort of people. And anyway you're the sort of person who could do any job well; but I don't understand why you are so anxious to get one. Only last night you were talking about unnecessary responsibilities, and here you are plunging straight into them! Besides an office job would coop you up so, you'd be indoors all the time.'

'And what else can I do with myself?'

'But, John, why go to London? Why not do something you'd like? An out-of-door job like farming?'

He had thought of the possibility of farming. He would like it, but he wasn't going to do it. 'No, I shall go and see Glitneys,

the beer racketeers, they offered me a job when I came down from Cambridge.' He smiled.

'But why this sudden decision? And you can't go up to London every day from here.'

He looked away with a guilty but obstinate expression. 'If I settle anything I thought I'd come down every weekend, and perhaps take a room somewhere in London.'

'Oh, you can't do that. I'll come up and we'll find a flat somewhere.'

He did not answer. For a few months she had everything she had wanted, and now it seemed that she was again back on her own resources. She was reminded of an autumn day long ago in her childhood when she had been lost, though she was not far away from her home. Suddenly she had seen a figure in the distance, someone to ask her way from. Across the long ploughed field in the cold sun to the silhouette, but when she reached it she found that it was only a scarecrow. She had felt the same chilly pang as she felt now when she had stood by the scarecrow and heard nothing except the flapping of its clothes and some distant rooks cawing; she was still lost and there was no one except herself to find her way for her.

'That'll be fine! When I've settled on something we'll look for a flat!' Too hearty, too late! How she hated him at that moment for not loving her as she loved him.

A fortnight had gone by and still he had not returned. She went through all the suffering of unequal love where pain is the constant emotion, happiness the rare visitor who arrives only just in time to turn the trickling sands before hurrying away. If he telephoned her heart jumped, he was coming back tomorrow. No he wasn't, but it would all be settled soon, he would be down in a few days, he was having dinner tonight with some Cambridge friends. A sleepless night wondering if he would get drunk, make love to anyone, go to bed with someone. If he didn't telephone, the ghastly propping open of all the doors in case she should miss the bell. Sometimes a morning of tough independence—here I am safely married; dear John, I do love him, but I could get along quite well without him, anyway I don't have to, so why worry? Followed by the small hours of the afternoon with no emotions but a languid background of discomfort; followed by the evening when everything became

excited and doubled as though her own body was chained, but an astral body followed him about, in and out of parties into restaurants where he was dining with other women.

There was no second sight about her suspicions, she could not confirm them, and the fact that they happened to be correct made no difference to her state of mind.

He had hovered and made no decisions, there were two jobs he could have taken, and instead of 'thinking it over' he had spent his days thinking of nothing at all. Immediately he had arrived in London he had got in touch with his most sociable friends and had met with them a girl called Jennie, whom he found attractive. The second night they met again and she had gone home with him, and after that they had been looked upon as a couple by their mutual friends who, though in private were rather pompous about the affair and told each other it was 'a bit thick, after all what about Cynthia', nevertheless made everything as easy as possible for John to continue, and encouraged him in what they called his disloyalty.

Jennie was married but her husband had been in India for eighteen months. She had not been unfaithful to him before, and confessed to John that it was not so much that she wanted to make love to him that had made her suddenly go off with him, but that she was beginning to feel a curious dry frustration in having no one upon whom to shower affection. Was her marriage a happy one? Yes, it was, he had no idea what a profound happiness there was in a happy marriage. His wife sounded a very hard person though.

It seemed to him strange that given a certain set of stimuli, in this case a girl whom it was possible to love and idealize, emotions should be let loose that he had always imagined were unique. When he lay in Jennie's arms it seemed to happen automatically that he should want to protect her, never to leave her, and to experience intense comfort and happiness. It was as though it was all waiting in him to fix on to somebody, and it worried him that though the details were different he had felt it all before. The emotion he felt for Jennie could not be described as deep, but was that not just because they had only known each other for a few days? Were not deep, as opposed to violent, feelings merely dependent upon length of time? But even with her he felt the slight contempt and boredom that he always suffered

after he had been to bed with someone. He did not like to see her washing her face or fiddling with her hair; he became satiated with her company and always went to his club or visited bachelor friends.

Then, one evening at the end of a fortnight, which in a way was so brief and yet had developed a routine of its own, he went to telephone Cynthia. As usual he felt guilty and hostile when she answered in a casual voice through which he could detect hysteria.

'Hullo, darling, however many more interviews are you going to have?'

'Only one more, tomorrow.'

'Will you be back the day after?'

'Well, I'm not sure, not absolutely sure, but I should think so.'

'You see, darling, I've got some exciting news for you. We're going to have a baby! I thought we might celebrate.'

'A baby!' A baby! Good God! It seemed as though the whole of his loose unanalysed thoughts, his put-off decisions, had suddenly crystallized into a sword pointing at his throat.

'Isn't it wonderful? I'm not feeling too good at the moment, but it'll pass off,' already her voice had a self-important quality of maternity.

'Aren't you pleased? After all—' her voice began to wobble.

'Oh yes, my dear, it makes the job even more important now though, doesn't it?'

'Well I must go now,' she said, 'goodbye.' She hung up. I'm not going to argue and force him to say he's pleased, I'm not. She burst into tears and walked about the house muttering with self pity. I was so excited, he's ruined it all, he only had to be pleased, he's ruined it.

The effect of her abrupt ringing off was what she hoped it would be, he was horrified at his brutality. He went back to Jennie waiting at the table to order dinner.

'I've done something terrible,' he said, 'Cynthia told me she was going to have a baby—a baby—I was so flabbergasted that instead of sounding pleased I'm afraid I sounded horrified. I think she was rather upset.'

'Upset, I should think so,' replied Jennie, 'Fancy her having to tell you that over the telephone! Fancy you not being there to know. Poor thing.' She sounded almost as reproachful as Cynthia.

'Damn it, darling, I would be there if I wasn't here with you.'

'I'm not stopping you going back. I think you ought to ring her up again now, anyway.'

'I'm going to order my food and have something to drink first.' He ordered several drinks because he had decided that he wanted to get drunk.

'You're very lucky,' said Jennie, 'Peter and I long to have a baby, but we thought we'd better wait.'

He looked at her. 'I suppose all these natural events have enough impetus to make them bearable if two people are in love with each other.'

'It is your own fault,' she said, 'marriage is a serious thing, and if you don't take it seriously and just marry someone for inadequate reasons, how can you expect it to be bearable?'

'I find it bearable already, that is what I complain of. And I don't know what adequate reasons are for marriage.'

'Well, I don't understand why you complain. If marriage is bearable to you why doesn't that include having a child?'

'I suppose it is because it knocks into the ground any day-dreams I have of being able to escape one day,' he answered. As he became gradually drunk he became more disgusted and melancholy. There was nothing for it, he would get a safe job, until the end of his days he could not escape. It was Cynthia's fault. He would take the least congenial of the two jobs, it was all her bloody fault. As always when he drank he began to think of Thomas. He has found that far from time healing this wound it had increased it, because the agony was just as sharp, and added to it was the bitterness that time was slipping away as well. He would never feel again about anyone, any damn woman, what he had felt about Thomas. Who could compare in looks with Thomas? Cynthia resembled him, but her hair was mouse where his had been golden, her eyes were hazel where his had been blue, his character had been balanced between imagination and simplicity whereas hers was not balanced at all.

'Now don't look so depressed,' said Jennie. 'What's on your mind?'

'Nothing in particular.' He would never discuss Thomas with anyone, never. Why was that moment when Thomas had stood adjusting his rope, with his hair falling over his face, continually in his mind when other things were forgotten? It seemed

that instead of time moving with him steadily along an unpredicted course, occasionally he had the illusion that he was moving and time was stationary; furthermore that he too sometimes became stationary inside a moment, not necessarily a critical one, and was consequently overwhelmed with its vividness, suffering simultaneously from its quality of eternity because it seemed always to have been there, and its infinitesimal quality because the whole past, present and future seemed always to have been there as well. Whenever he thought of Thomas and himself climbing the mountain, that moment came back to him, containing all his love for Thomas, standing masculine, narrow-hipped, his spatulate fingers round the rope, and all the physical pleasure of the continual climb nearer to the sky, rare and silent, and further from the earth, which emphasized his mortality.

'I think you ought to go and telephone again.'

'Ah, yes.' He picked his way through the restaurant, concentrating drunkenly as he did so. Round this table, mustn't run into this old man—I loved him and he's dead, I loved him.

'Is that you, Cynthia, darling? I just rang back, there was such a noise here before I couldn't talk properly,' he suddenly felt warm and enthusiastic, 'it's terribly exciting about the baby, when did you know?'

'I wasn't sure, but I've begun being sick . . .' she prattled on about her symptoms.

'I'll be there the day after tomorrow definitely. I've decided on the Glitneys job. It'll be rather monotonous at first, I shall have to tour the provinces. But it may lead to better things.'

'Well that's all to the good isn't it,' she had been uncertain about his taking a job because she had thought that he was going away for ever. But now she was relieved. 'What's John going to do now he's finished his book?' 'He's got a job in Glitneys, the beer people, pretty boring, my dear, but one must live, mustn't one? We're taking a little house in London.'

John was so tired when he rejoined Jennie that he realized what he meant by deep feelings; Cynthia, whom he did not really love, seemed, nevertheless, a part of his life, whereas Jennie sitting there was not a part of his life at all, and now that he was exhausted he did not think about her, but found that he was wondering about Cynthia's sickness.

'You have been a long time,' she said crossly.

'It was your idea to telephone her again,' he replied, 'I couldn't be any quicker than I was without being brusque.'

'I know, but it's rather embarrassing sitting for hours by oneself in a restaurant, especially as a man over there has been trying to get off with me.'

He was unmoved by her remark, she enjoyed men staring at her so why pretend to be so squeamish about it? She began to talk of her husband, and the evening ended with a fractious insistence on the part of both of them in talking about their respective husband and wife, each irritated by the other doing so, but each admitting to themselves that they were tied to someone else.

Nine months later John raced from their little house in Kensington to the nursing home. He had been telephoning all day from his office and now the news had come through—a boy. When he arrived, agitated, at the home, he asked a nurse how Cynthia was, and was told that she had had an easy time. He crept into her room, to find her extremely pale, but happy and almost dignified.

'It wasn't too bad, was it, darling, they told me you'd had an easy time?'

'It was absolutely ghastly,' she said with a great effort, but smiling, 'I don't know what they call a difficult time. But it's wonderful now it's over. Have you seen him?'

'Well, no, I haven't.'

'I'll ring for a nurse.'

A few minutes later a nurse came into the room with the baby wrapped up and almost invisible. He looked anxiously at its face. 'Why,' he said after a pause, 'it's exactly like Thomas.' He was overcome with a mixture of emotions.

'That's exactly what I thought!' she stretched out her arms for the baby. 'It's got his wonderful eyelashes.' She was still drugged and remembered a voice in her childhood. 'Fancy Thomas having those long eyelashes, quite wasted on a little boy, aren't they, Cynthia?'

John peered over the bed. He found it hard to see any eyelashes at all on the tiny face, though he could see some tears on the cheeks.

'How extraordinary to think that he will go to school,' he said, 'and to a university.' Amused, they began to discuss which school he would go to.

'Poor little thing,' she said, bending over the baby and kissing him; 'were we planning his little future for him when he's only a few hours old.' But she continued to talk about the merits of various public schools in a serious way.

At last John got up to leave. 'It's very annoying,' he said. 'But I've got to go to Glasgow tomorrow, I couldn't persuade them to send anyone else.'

'Oh dear!' she answered, 'what a bore. I was so hoping you wouldn't be going away.' Even through all her excitement and sense of fulfilment about the baby she felt an anxious twinge that he would meet some girl in Glasgow.

'I'm furious about it,' he said, and indeed he was rather annoyed at having to trail all the way to Glasgow. Nearly always when he went away he was unfaithful to her, but there was no affection, there had not been another Jennie, yet.

He kissed her, and went over to the door.

'Of course we'll call it Thomas,' he said. 'How I wish he could see his nephew!'

'Of course we'll call him Thomas,' she answered, but in her heart she would have preferred another name.

When he had gone she kissed the baby, 'Were you going to be a successful little baby man, were you, darling?' she said.

## JACK LINDSAY

# THE FUTURE OF DEMOCRATIC VALUES

A REPLY TO DWIGHT MACDONALD

IN his essay in the November number of HORIZON Dwight Macdonald neatly pigeon-holes most of the main intellectual reactions from the present world-developments. But he does not seem to see how he himself falls into some of the categories that he disdains. That of the ex-Marxists, for instance, 'disillusioned' by 1917, or that of the Machiavellians who debunk the progressive hope. For his own line of thought is conditioned by that 'disillusion' and by the need to undermine what has actually been achieved of Socialism. That he has his own little private