

then allures them into the air—making short flights by way of example, and safe-guarding them beneath with her wings. Driven from their security and tempted into the blue, the young eagles make their great venture.

Very tenderly and very carefully does our Father prepare for His children an environment in this life, that at no time we may be defenceless. One nest after another, is built out of many circumstances, all touched and softened by the Divine Love; from the beautiful world into which we are born, to the house that a hundred sacred associations have made home. We settle down in each nest with a sense of rest and finality, and have no wish to risk ourselves in the depths outside our little life. Left to ourselves we had never cherished any spiritual ambition; we had never wished to use our wings. But Providence, sometimes by rude shocks, sometimes by gentler compulsions, dislodges us from our place and casts us forth where we must fly or be dashed to pieces. The great changes of life are moments of supreme adventure, when we bid good-bye to the homes which, with a hundred familiar surroundings, bid us stay and commit ourselves to the unknown, with its depths below and its heights above. Every new departure is an abandonment of security; it is an expedition into an unexplored and mysterious region. It is a venture of the soul.

Changes are one of the surest means for bracing and quickening character. Within the bounds of uneventful and secured circumstances, where from childhood to old age life flows evenly, smoothly, slowly, with no rapids, no pools, no rocks, a type of character is formed that is not without beauty. It is gentle, tender, thoughtful, but it cannot be strong. Where life has had its emergencies, its agonies, its surprises, its specula-

tions, it has its highest possibilities. When men have put forth from the shore in search of a new world, when they have staked their all upon a new enterprise, when they have faced a revolution in life, they grow resolute and strenuous. It was his emigration from his father's house into an unknown country that brought Abraham to his height. The crisis in Moses' career was his surrender of princely luxury, and his identification of himself with a horde of slaves. A handful of Jewish peasants have changed the face of the world, because there was in them the heart to answer the call of Jesus. No one can ever imagine what power may be lying unused and hidden till a man is driven off his ledge, where he has been fed and warmed, without fear and without thought. Do not judge him while he has only fluttered his wings at the coming of food; wait till he stretches them to go up to heaven. It is in the throes of a revolution a nation comes to birth; it is in the moment of change the soul awakes.

Among the various changes in ordinary life four are conspicuous, and the first comes when one leaves home for the first time, and makes his plunge into the world. It does not matter very much whether he is going to a public school or to business in a great city: he is beginning life on his own account. As the day draws near—a day no one can ever forget, when he passes out of the old homestead for the first time—there is a tumult in the heart. The unspeakable privileges of a good home—the daily oversight, the spoken advice, the kindly offices, the sense of protection, the warmth of love, suddenly arise before the memory and are appreciated to the full, just as they are about to be lost. The vague dangers of the new life, its strange faces, unaccustomed duties, lonely circumstances, unexpected temptations, pos-