

Helen Keller's speech
Lions International Convention
Cedar Point, Ohio
June 30, 1925

Dear Lions and Ladies, I suppose you have heard the legend that represents opportunity as a capricious lady who knocks at every door but once, and if the door isn't opened quickly, she passes on, never to return. And that is how it should be, lovely desirable ladies won't wait. You have to go out and grab 'em.

I am your opportunity. I am knocking at your door. I want to be adopted. The legend doesn't say what you are to do when several beautiful opportunities present themselves at the same door. I guess you have to choose the one you love best. I hope you will adopt me. I am the youngest here, and what I have to offer you is full of splendid opportunities for service.

Try to imagine how you would feel if you were suddenly stricken blind today. Picture yourself stumbling and groping at noonday as in the night, your work, independence, gone! In that dark world wouldn't you be glad if a friend took you by the hand and said "come with me and I will teach you how to do some of the things you used to do when you could see"?

You have heard how through a little word dropped from the fingers of another, a ray of light from another soul touched the darkness of my mind and I found myself, found the world, found God. It is because my teacher learned about me and broke through the dark, silent, imprisonment, which held me that I am able to work for myself and for others. It is the caring we want more than money. The gift without the sympathy and interest of the giver is empty. If you care, if we can make the people of this great country care, the blind will indeed triumph over blindness!

Will you not help me hasten the day when there shall be no preventable blindness; no little deaf, blind children untaught; no blind man or woman unaided? I appeal to you Lions, you who have your sight and hearing, you who are strong and brave and kind.

Will you not constitute yourselves Knights of the Blind
in this crusade against darkness?