

HK
Speeches

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Lions Club
International
Convention
Cedar Point, OHIO

Dear Lions,

I suppose you have heard the poetic legend which 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 as it should be. Lovely, desirable ladies won't wait, you have to go out and grab 'em. I am your Opportunity, clothed in visibility. I am knocking at your door. I want to be adopted, ~~married!~~ ~~I want to have a lot of money spent on me.~~ The legend doesn't say what you are to do when several beautiful Opportunities present themselves at the same door. I guess you are to choose the one you love best. I hope you will choose me. I am the youngest, and the opportunity I offer you is full of splendid possibilities of service.

The American Foundation for the Blind is only four years old. It grew out of the imperative needs of the blind, and was called into being by the sightless themselves. It is national and international in scope and importance. It represents the best and most enlightened ~~problems~~ thought on our problems that has been reached so far. It embodies a new idea in our work, unity of effort, which is scientific and modern. It will render

impartial assistance to all classes of the blind. It will make the efforts of local organizations more effective, more fruitful in results.

The time has come to regard the work for the sightless as a whole, in which the kindergarten, the school, the library, the workshop, the home for the aged blind and prevention are seen to be parts of a great movement with one end in view, namely, making life more worth living for the blind everywhere. Beside the young blind, for whom existing institutions are supposed to provide, there is a large class of men and women who lose their sight when it is too late for them to go to school. Those who are in the dark from childhood are hard pressed to find their place in the work of the world; but the man suddenly stricken blind is another Samson, bound, helpless, dependent, until a way is found to unchain him.

Try to imagine how you would feel if you lost your sight tomorrow. Picture yourself stumbling and groping at noonday as in the night, your work, your independence gone! In that dark hour wouldn't your heart cry out for a friend to teach you how to live in the dark?

That is just the kind of friend the American

Foundation will be to all the blind if people with sight will only give it the support it must have. Adequately financed, it will help the blind in every emergency of their lives.

You have heard how I was taught ___ how a little word 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, and found God! It is because my teacher cared about me, and broke through the dark, silent imprisonment which held me that I am able to work for myself and for others. If you care, if we can make the people of this great country care, the blind will triumph over blindness.

This is the opportunity I offer you, Lions ___ to foster and sponsor the work of the American Foundation for the Blind. Will you not help me hasten the day when there shall be no preventable blindness, no little deaf blind child untaught, no blind man or woman unaided. I appeal to you, Lions ___ you who have your sight, your hearing, you who are strong and brave and kind, will you not constitute yourselves Knights of the Blind in my crusade against darkness?

Helen Keller