

"LAW"

LESTER LUTHER

At the rise of the curtain the stage is entirely black but for a deep violet-red strip of light lying low around the horizon. Not a sound is heard for some minutes—then there is a sigh and a movement. The voice of a young boy is heard; low in pitch, as if he were afraid to talk aloud.

BOY

It never changes—it never changes—red—bright red like fire.
It's like blood, too—like a wave of—

THE VOICE OF AN OLD WOMAN

Seven days and no one dies. Seven days and it never changes.

THE VOICE OF A YOUNG WOMAN

I tried to close my eyes, but the lids are of steel.

VOICE OF ANOTHER WOMAN

Mine too. If only sleep would come!

THE VOICE OF A MAN

They say Sleep and Death have departed from the earth.
. . . . If one could only close one's eyes!

THE VOICE OF ANOTHER MAN

They say He has destroyed Sleep and Death.
He has destroyed all the wishes of men.

THE VOICE OF AN OLD WOMAN

Hunger remains. It is clawing me, clawing me.
Hunger and Pain.

ANOTHER VOICE

Hunger and Pain.

THE VOICE OF THE YOUNG BOY

It never changes—It never changes—It never changes.
It's the color of the snow on the battlefield.

THE VOICE OF A YOUNG WOMAN

The ocean is red and the earth—and all the clear brooks.
There is no water anywhere since the rain of blood.
Water! Water! I'm thirsty! I'm thirsty!

THE VOICE OF A MAN

The trees and shrubs drank the blood like mad. Their leaves
are all a-dripping red. It made me sick to see them suck the
blood up.

THE VOICE OF A WOMAN

The animals went mad with joy. How they lapped the little

pools and then fell to killing each other so that they might have more blood.

THE VOICE OF A YOUTH

I saw the priest's robe. It was stained all over. He was caught in the middle of the downpour.

THE VOICE OF A MAN

Very few escaped.

THE VOICE OF A WOMAN

Those who did were mostly children.

THE VOICE OF THE YOUNG BOY

It never changes—It never changes [*Crying*] I can't look away—I can't look away. It never changes.

THE VOICE OF A MAN

My God—why doesn't something happen! Seven days of that burning red and this calm. Why can't I go mad! My God!

ANOTHER MAN

Don't pray—no one can hear you. No one is listening.

THE VOICE OF THE YOUNG BOY

It never changes—why should I suffer? It never changes—
It never——

A WOMAN

Be thankful you can talk. Some are struck dumb.

THE VOICE OF ANOTHER WOMAN

The cannon have ceased.

THE VOICE OF A MAN

Long ago.

THE VOICE OF AN OLD WOMAN

They ceased when the dead began to come to life on the field.
My son came home to me. He had been dead for three days.
I did not recognize him. Part of his head was gone and his body was decayed.

A MAN

I arose from the dead.
[*A tense silence*]

THE VOICE OF THE YOUNG BOY

It never changes. It never changes.

THE MAN WHO AROSE FROM THE DEAD

It is easier to die than to live, but to live and die and live again—My God! [*Silence*] The thousands who committed suicide with the hope of bringing the war to an end that way, are resurrected too.

THE VOICE OF A WOMAN

Yes—I am one.

THE RESURRECTED MAN

Did you torment the souls of those in authority as they passed beyond?

THE RESURRECTED WOMAN

No—I hunted for my son. I am a mother.

THE RESURRECTED MAN

How could you expect to find him?

THE RESURRECTED WOMAN

Those gone out from the world seemed possessed of a double savagery and cunning. God! . . . is there any hope anywhere?

THE RESURRECTED MAN

No. None—anywhere.

THE VOICE OF THE YOUNG BOY

It never changes. It never changes.

[The distant voice of a child is heard saying a prayer]

A WOMAN

I thought the children had gone of the plague.

ANOTHER WOMAN

No—one remains.

[The prayer becomes clearer. All are quiet. A tense calm. The red in the sky begins to dim. A terrible silence. Suddenly the red disappears]

THE VOICE OF A MAN AND A WOMAN SPEAKING IN UNISON *[as if from above]*

The end cometh that is the beginning. For behold, I appear. I am always.

A CHORUS OF CHILDREN

Behold the Word, and hear it.

THE TWO VOICES

Behold the end of man. On his victory I place defeat.

CHORUS OF CHILDREN

Behold the Might of the Word *[Echo chorus]* and hear it.

THE TWO VOICES

In man's hands I laid a divine power. He scoffed at me and lost me—but I always knew his dwelling place, for I made it.

CHORUS OF CHILDREN

Behold God's Love.

TWO VOICES

You have cast me out of your hearts. Your tongues waxed sharp against me,—so I withdrew.

CHORUS OF CHILDREN

Behold the Word—and hear it.

THE TWO VOICES

Call me Buddha—Life—Force—Energy—Christ—what you will—I care not. To me a name is as a breath. You make too much of words. You have forgotten me.

CHORUS OF CHILDREN

Behold the Word and hear it.

THE TWO VOICES

Mighty am I. Around my throat is hung the necklace of the worlds. My head is crowned by Eternity. My garments are the Life of all lives. Mighty am I in Kindness—for I am Love.

CHORUS OF CHILDREN

Mighty is Love.

THE TWO VOICES

Man's rule hath failed. Love calls. Come!

CHILDREN'S CHORUS

Come!

THE TWO VOICES

Man is gone forever.

[One terrific shriek from the multitudes of Earth]

THE TWO VOICES

I am.

CORRESPONDENCE

Liberty and License

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE FORUM]

DEAR SIR,—I was very much disgusted with H. M. Aubrey's article in the April FORUM, entitled *Liberty and License*.

He certainly makes a grave charge against all womankind; one that his arguments do not bear out and that all thinking women will take exception to, as it stands.

If greater license has resulted from the greater liberty that women are now enjoying, it ought first to be proved that the women who have the greater liberty are indulging in greater license, and second, it should be shown what kind of license is being indulged in.

He says: "But with these (old) laws of jealousy, convention, religion and legislation, the woman had nothing to do, save obey: in that far-away time her share in the making of laws was too infinitesimal to be worth considering; to-day, in many of the States, she has theoretically as potent a voice in the making of the laws as man, and in all the States her influence is so great that no law-maker can safely ignore her. This being so, the greater laxity of divorce is properly chargeable to her, and if the resultant inference shows a lowering of her standard of female chastity, she must be held responsible. . . . And that the greater laxity of social and conventional law is directly chargeable to her there can be no question." Here he is only making rash statements, that he is not proving.

"There can be no question" in the mind of man who first made the laws, tried and fitted them to the woman and now passes sentence upon her as being responsible for lowering the "standards" as previously laid down by himself.

He admits that with the old laws she had not the slightest chance to influence the law-makers, and the inference is that the laws were correspondingly good, which they were not; while he says, "To-day, she is theoretically as potent as man"—"theoretically" is the only good word in the sentence. Yes, it will be admitted that "theoretically" she is potent, but how do the facts in the case square with his argument? What sort of lawyer must Mr. Aubrey be, if he thinks that we are living under a "new dispensation"?

If we have made any laws in the short time that women have had suffrage in many of the States, how many of these laws are traceable to woman's influence, or, if traceable, how many of them have been of a kind to lower standards or morals? The women have not been directly in the legislative halls, not more than one or two in, at least, three States, and if this small number are to be charged with the direct effect of increasing