

THE VISIONS OF YOUTH

makes me join the words 'drastic' and 'hopeful' together and avoid any which, like 'cynical' or 'destructive', have negative associations. The young generation is not sceptical, though they may seem detached and indistinct in their beliefs. They have seen too many prospects and vistas open, disclosing possibilities of great developments, not to have a great confidence that something is afoot, and that history has a purpose. They are ready to see the game played on a great scale and with big pieces. Science, with its vast exhibition of potent forces, has contributed to this. Religion, with its recent stress upon what is apocalyptic, tells the same way. And now war has come to corroborate all this. It does so by its colossal proportions and by the novelty and prodigious effects of new forces, appliances, and combinations. But I am thinking more of its power to draw all the world-forces into one huge interplay of communication and collision, and more still of its revelation of the vast effects which may come from ways of teaching and thinking, applied sedulously and working constantly, through the whole of a people's life. The revelation of what may arise, as if 'in an hour that we were not aware of', in the shape of a national self-adulation and ambition, working itself through a rage of envy into a worship of hatred, has been enough to make the generation feel that the stage upon which they are starting to play is not one of small passions or limited forces.

With some, of course, the effect will be to suggest evil