Between the Acts is one of Virginia Woolf’s most political novels. Once attacked for ‘its extraordinary vacancy and pointlessness’ and its lack of concern for ‘an external world’, it is now generally understood to be a deeply felt response to fascism, patriarchy and the coming of the Second World War. However, while the book’s feminist and pacifist themes are well explored, its central motif, a village pageant, is not well understood in terms of its historical context. Critics have tended to regard it in terms of tradition.
The Warwick Pageant was a huge drama festival, organised by Louis N. Parker, which took place in the grounds of Warwick Castle, England, in July 1906 and was later described as “the biggest thing which ever happened to Warwick”. The pageant was performed in the grounds of Warwick Castle, England, during the week of 2 to 7 July 1906 and was a major undertaking. In 1905 the Warwick town authorities had approached Louis N. Parker (see below) and asked him to “add another triumph” to that which he had