

British Gossip

PERHAPS the greatest pageant of them all was that given at Bury St. Edmunds last month, which was arranged by Mr. Louis N. Parker. Five centuries of East Anglican history passed in varied and picturesque pomp before the thousands who crowded the old Suffolk town. The arena was on the site of the abbey, now in ruins. The remains of the great altar at which the Norman Barons took a solemn vow to enforce the ratification of the Magna Charta from King John, was in sight of the crowd. At the opening of the pageant, Boadicea, surrounded by her army, made a triumphal entry in her war-chariot, driving with great spirit into the presence of the Roman officers and guard. Boadicea, the "British warrior queen," was undoubtedly the heroine of the pageant and proved an eloquent exponent of her country's wrongs, uniting the enthusiasm of a suffragette with the imagination of an Irish Nationalist. The massacre of the Romans and the victory of the brave Boadicea may not have been strictly historic but a pageant is a sort of fairy tale in which there ought to be poetic justice, to satisfy the multitude. Could there not be a Hastings pageant with Harold, son of Earl Godwin, victorious? Most readers of English history have grudged the Senlac triumph to that overbearing William.

Most devourers of light fiction had almost forgotten "Ouida," when the tale of her financial distress was suddenly made public and Miss Marie Corelli wrote to the papers suggesting that a fund should be started for the purpose of placing "Ouida" beyond anxiety for the rest of her days. Miss Corelli proved her sincerity by enclosing a cheque for twenty-five pounds, which the destitute author of "Cecil Castleman's Gage" will probably spend on jewellery or luxuries for her pet dogs. "Ouida" was born at the pageant town, Bury St. Edmunds, some seventy odd years ago. Her mother was an Englishwoman, while her father, M. de la Ramee, was a French refugee who had settled in England. The talented daughter, Louise, began to write romances at an early age, her first novel being "Held in Bondage." It was followed by a goodly procession of about forty works of fiction of which "Under Two Flags" is the most popular. "Moths" stirred considerable discussion, as to its morbid tendencies but several feminine writers of fiction have written so many infinitely worse books during the last decade that "Moths" seems a harmless flutterer in comparison. Dogs have been "Ouida's" pet extravagance and one of her daintiest stories has a canine hero. "A Dog of Flanders" is a story not to be forgotten. "Two Little Wooden Shoes" is another exquisite fragment. In fact, the short tales written by "Ouida" are of much finer quality than her longer efforts.

Rev. R. J. Campbell, successor to the late Dr. Joseph Parker at the City Temple, London, has defined in book form, the "New Theology" of which he is the modern proclaimer. By the way, is not this adjective "new" being overworked? We have also the "New Drama" and the "New Novel," while the "New Woman" has become banal. It is no wonder that the public is turning to pageants of past glories by way of relief. Several reviewers observe sapiently that fifty years ago Mr. Campbell would have been denounced as a heretic. In the seventeenth century he would have been imprisoned and in the sixteenth he would have been burned. While the tone of Mr. Campbell's preaching and writing has the reverence of one who realises that he is touching matters of life and death, he is entirely fearless in the expression of his own beliefs. The following sentence is the reverse of the mediaeval theology: "The real Judge is the deeper self, the self who is eternally one with God." Many of the paragraphs in this new volume read like Emerson made easy. Mr. Campbell and Father Bernard Vaughan, although very different in theological outlook, continue to attract more notice from the public and the press than any other of the clerical lights of London.

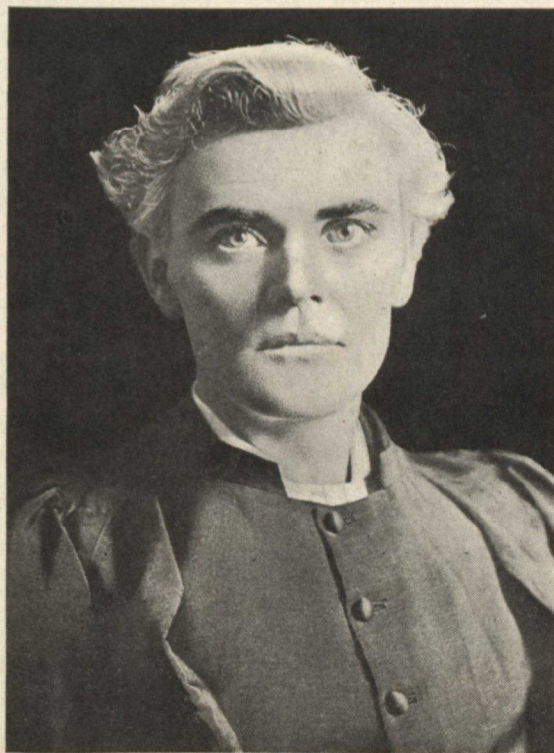
But there is a new preacher, whose personality has created a greater sensation than even the Welsh evangelist, Evan Roberts. This is none other than a small girl aged twelve who delivers remarkable sermons with deep earnestness but no apparent consciousness of the extraordinary nature of her utterances. She is said to be calm and self-possessed in manner, with a singular magnetic power over her audience, which are composed of all classes, from society leaders to women of the roughest

factory order. The incredulous public is turning in profound perplexity to these gatherings and is becoming convinced that there is an extraordinary gift bestowed upon this juvenile preacher.

The freaks of fashionable society are not nearly so amusing to those who practise them as they are to those who look on. It seems as if the "cult of the occult" has been carried as far as it will go. But a new interest has arisen which sends crystal-gazing and spiritualism into the background. No longer do pale-blue and violet-hued spooks arouse the curiosity of the West End. The proper thing to do is to take an impression of the thumb and have it read by experts in the art, who send a character sketch for an absurdly small sum. For a somewhat larger sum, hints as to the future will be gently conveyed.

Europe seems to have gone motor mad and the chauffeur is in a fair way to make a fortune. Records are made and broken in a fashion to render the unmotored reader dizzy. The fastest run on record between Monte Carlo and London was taken in May last by Mr. H. R. Pope who made the flight in his 40 h.p. "Itala" car in twenty-nine hours, sixteen minutes. A former Canadian journalist, Mr. T. L. Grahame, accompanied him as a note-taking passenger and his account of the journey takes away the breath of the ordinary traveller. Mr. Pope seems possessed of the Englishman's desire to accomplish risky feats without turning a hair and he flew through the pleasant land of France at a rate which rivalled Ariel's boast: "I drink the air." The English do not take their pleasures sadly—they take them vigorously. To leave Monte Carlo at three o'clock in the morning, race along velvet roads, and reach Boulogne at four o'clock the following morning, take an English steamer to Folkestone and arrive in London at 8.46 a.m. is a feat of motoring which leaves the ordinary imagination gasping.

The infant Marquis of Donegall, whose mother is a Canadian woman, has lately been attracting some interest, as the matter of his inheritance has been in dispute. M.A.P. recently stated that at the time of the death of the late Marquis the patrimony bequeathed to his heir was sworn at twenty-seven pounds, which, invested at 3½ per cent., would have brought in an income of 18s. 10d. annually. This did not sound enough for the average Canadian boy's pocket money and the infant Marquis became the object of compassion. But the journal in question discovered that it was mistaken and now states that the small heir, on his father's death, became entitled to considerable estates in Ireland, and through his trustees, is in receipt of the rents and profits derived from them. Irish real estate is a trifle uncertain but it is better than a capital of twenty-seven pounds.



Rev. R. J. Campbell.