

## Victor Cox around 1926

The other highlight during the course of my activities in the Sunday School was the Boxing Day entertainment at Christmas. Even before my time there was always a "Boxing Day Concert", but when I joined as a teacher this concert was developing into something more than a concert. We started giving operettas under the guidance of one of the older teachers, Miss Fisher, who was a dressmaker by trade. The shows we gave were very popular, and the schoolroom was packed to capacity on Boxing Day evening. Gradually, younger teachers came into the Sunday School bringing new ideas and looking for something more spectacular than operettas, good though they were.

One year, St Bartholemew's Church at Armley gave a pantomime, written and produced by their curate, and it was such a success that we decided to approach the producer with the request that we be allowed to borrow the script and produce it in Bramley. He readily agreed, and so started quite a long run of pantomimes all written and produced by ourselves. The writing was carried out by a small committee of which was always one, and we amazed ourselves at the ideas which came flowing out of our fertile brains. It was great fun thinking up jokes to insert, and many a good laugh we had. There was always the problem of choosing music, and we always managed to find a popular song to be sung by the principal characters and the choruses. We produced all the well known pantomimes such as Jack and the Beanstalk, Aladdin, Robinson Crusoe, etc., and I took many of the principal parts.

I remember always feeling rather nervous while standing in the wings waiting for my cue to go on stage, but once I was facing the audience any nervousness disappeared and I put everything I had into acting the part I was playing. These shows were not restricted to Boxing Day evening; they were given all through the week to capacity audiences. After a long run of pantomimes we were brought to an abrupt halt by the Second world war, and in later years when we thought of reviving them we found that a lot of our "props" had mysteriously disappeared.

It was during my association with the Sunday School that I met a girl who, though I didn't know it at the time, was to be my future wife. She was Mary Gambles, and she also took a very active part in the pantomimes, particularly with the younger children, or "Sunbeams", being kept specially busy making dresses for them, a job for which she was well suited, having been apprenticed to our dressmaker teacher, Miss Fisher, and now a fully qualified dressmaker herself.

I enjoyed the pantomime work and rather fancied myself as an actor. What if someone high up in show business sat in the audience and picked me out as an up and coming actor!!! It sounds ridiculous, doesn't it? but I think I could have made a good show. what ideas one gets!

