

**Audition Piece for Iolanthe**

**QUEEN.** And now, tell me, with all the world to choose from, why on earth did *y o u* decide to live at the bottom of that stream?

**IOL.** To be near my son, Strephon.

**QUEEN.** Bless my heart, I didn't know you had a son.

**IOL.** He was born soon after I left my husband by your royal command – but he *d o e s* not even know of his father's existence.

**FLETA.** How old is he?

**IOL.** Twenty-four.

**LEILA.** Twenty-four! No one, to look at you, would think you had a son of twenty-four! But that's one of the advantages of being immortal. We never grow old! Is he pretty?

**IOL.** He's extremely pretty, but he's inclined to be stout.

**ALL** (*disappointed*). Oh!

**QUEEN.** I see no objection to stoutness, in moderation.

**CELIA.** And what is he?

**IOL.** He's an Arcadian shepherd – and he loves Phyllis, a Ward in Chancery.

**CELIA.** A mere shepherd! And he half a fairy!

**IOL.** He's a fairy down to the waist – but his legs are mortal.

**ALL.** Dear me!

**QUEEN.** I have no reason to suppose that I am more curious than other people, but I confess I should like to see a person who is a fairy down to the waist, but whose legs are mortal.

**IOL.** Nothing easier, for here he comes!