White Magic

Libretto by Henry Chorley

Music by Emanuele Biletta

Theatre Royal, Haymarket, London
March 17, 1852.

This libretto is a transcription from the from the manuscript held in the British Library at Add MS 52930 L. It was checked against the printed vocal items in *Words of the Songs, Duets and Trios* (London: W.S. Johnson, 1852) and the main additions or differences noted.

Vocal items are placed in the centre of the page or in two columns with singer in the left column about one third of the page width in. The dialogue is in two columns with the speaker in the left column on the extreme left of the page. The text is essentially what appears in the manuscript but there are some differences from the printed vocal items. Lines in red appear in the printed vocal items, but not in the manuscript. Lines in green appear in the manuscript vocal items, but not in the printed vocal items. Vocal items in black appear in both.

The handwriting in the manuscript was reasonably legible. Spellings are as in the manuscript and include such words as "honor" for "honour". The capitalisation of words is usually as in the printed libretto. **[x]** denotes the pages of the printed libretto. **{xxa}** denotes the leading side of a page of the manuscript and **{xxb}** the trailing side. Some punctuation has been changed for clarity.

More information on the opera can be found at https://www.englishromanticopera.org/operas/White_Magic.htm.

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White Magic

Characters

Colonel Laval
Count de Mericourt
M. de Blignac
Coralie
Rose

{3a}

Act 1, Scene 1

A large fantastic chamber, magical apparatus about.
Enter Peasant women who bring some offering.

Chorus
Too afraid alone to venture,
Fearing awful things to see,
Here, with beating hearts, we enter
Neighbour, neighbour, stand by me

Enter de Mericourt dressed as a fortune teller's servant

De M Who are ye, thus bold to enter
The domain of mystery?

Chorus Pray you, ere the evening closes,
Take my gifts and mine and mine.
Here are peaches. Here are roses
Snow-white bread, and ruby wine.

De M Thank you for my noble master,
Who, unseen, his chamber keeps
And, like mighty Zoroaster,
Ever studies, never sleeps.

Chorus Ever studies, never sleeps!
What a marvel he must be!
May we not your master see?

De M See him? He endures no stranger.
Dare you brave his certain anger I

Chorus No—no—no

De M 'Tis well I knew it
Who can tell how ye might rue it?
Vex him not, and he'll protect you.
If you tell your cares to me,
I may in your suit direct you.

{3b} (Getting *eagerly round him.*)

Chorus Beg him to bring back my lover,
Beg him but to get me one!
May your Lord his rest recover
Speak for us when we are gone

De M How soon they all believe
(aside) How easy to deceive
Ah, lady, rich and young
Too proud to join the throng,
Thou, too, shalt come, ere long,
Thy secret here to leave.
(to Chorus) He shall all your wishes know.
Shall I now some witchcraft show?

Chorus No, no, no (*bell tolls*)
Yonder the solemn chime
Tells of the holy time
When we should pray.
Not for the royal crown,
After the dark comes down,
Here dare I stay.

Heaven your good-will requite,
So now good night! -good night!
Come - come away!

De M If you would have our skill,
All your desires fulfil,
Here do not stay

(*Exit Chorus*)

De M Ha, ha, ha. There they go as merry as Queens – terrified to their hearts content. And tomorrow how they will wrangle and jangle about the shocking sights they have seen. Who **{4a}** would not be a conjuror? Only make the women believe that you are unaccountably mysterious and indescribably wicked and they will do the rest themselves. But my magic will hardly pass with my (…?) and coquettish Countess that is to be. I suspect Mademoiselle Coralie won't go away satisfied without a peep behind the curtain and how am I to get up a show for her benefit and make love to her at the same time my own single self - no matter - once let her cross the threshold - home will not go the heiress except as my wife or my name is not de Mericourt (*listens*) Hark already. So early – no 'tis a man step.

Enter Laval in great disorder

Laval One sells one's soul here does one not? You grind old folks young in your mill do you not?

De M What is your errand here –

Laval Let me speak with your master - I am ruined so he must find the bitter black parchment himself

De M He is not visible but I have full power as his deputy. I can transact your business for you perhaps

Laval You - what can you buy? Where's your cloven foot? Is your tail tucked away tidily around your neck? Come let me go in and speak to your master

De M By Jove, when I look at you nearly I fancy I see an old playfellow of mine - We have handled the dice box in company at Genoa - Colonel Laval seven years ago.

{4b}

Laval Why de Mericourt - who could know you behind such a beard. What has brought you so low have you been jilted too?

De M Not exactly. You have it seems and so your rich cousin jilted you after all. Why I have always thought of you as living a sober married man on the fat of the land.

Laval So far from it - our card playing at Genoa and my debts came to her priest's ear and he made her turn me a drift six years ago. So I took a leap into the Loire and was drowned to all intents and purposes so far as my creditors were concerned. Every one was sure I was dead, so having cut off my moustache, it was not difficult to get across to England and I was on the point of marrying in English woman out of revenge

De M Impossible!

Laval Fact. Misery you know says the proverb makes a man acquainted with particularly insufferable rich old women but alas discretion makes them sometimes put the most charming young man to the door the very day before the wedding. That was a blow and so I came back again to my own country where no one knows me.

Gone are the merry days,
When I could roam all night,
Singing in beauty's praise,
By the moon's mellow light.
Then I believed in love,
Fondly and fervently.
{5a} Torn is the web he wove.
No one cares where I rove
No one remembers me.

Gone is the buoyant heart;
Youth's golden spear and shield,
That played so brave a part
On the gay battle-field.
There have I foremost been,
Fearing no rivalry.

But colder days begin.
There's nothing left to win.
No one remembers me.

De M (*aside*) Reckless and ruined, the very man to help me. (*aloud*) Well Colonel Laval suppose I offer you substantial comfort. You left Genoa so suddenly that our last play account was unsettled. I forget the precise amount but here is a purse which I am glad to place in your hands towards clearing off old scores (*gives a purse*)

Laval You must be mad. You know as well as I on which side the debt lay. I can't accept a gift being a gentleman and I'm in no circumstances to contract a loan. Take it back

De M Not I. If I don't owe it to you I ought and I will for this very night on this very spot I want a service done me which no money can repay, which no one can do so well as yourself, a service of confidence and of revenge

Laval What do you want? But I am safe here with so many creditors as I have in Paris. Would your master the fortune **{5b}** teller harbour such a runaway? Is that your money or his?

De M My master the fortune teller. Why all you people tempt one to make fools of you. I am my own master.

Laval What do you mean? What are you doing here then? Are jackal and lion one? And there's no lion after all? And no fortune teller?

De M None, save myself. His man in disguise and yonder curtain

Laval Well what do you want 40 louis worth of me for

De M Because I only began the importune with one object

Laval And that object is?

De M An heiress, a chateau, a beauty, a wit and a coquette

Laval A prize of the first class as you describe her. But I don't see how this speculation of yours brings you nearer winning her

De M Not see. Can you spell curiosity? Master Laval. Again and again did my Coralie

Laval Coralie Heaven

De M Again and again have I heard her laugh at people who went to consult the Baron – my master that is - again and again have I heard her vow that no power on Earth should drag her across his threshold. Well, sir, you know what a woman's vows are worth. I have information that she intends to honor my master with a visit this very night

Laval And you wish to fit me up as your master for the occasion (*aside*) Coralie, plague upon the name (aloud) and pray with what purpose

De M Only an opportunity for a private hour of pretty warm wooing since the lady must no go hence but as the bride of the Count de Mericourt. Your part will receive the lady **{6a}, a**muse her credulity. Being a complete stranger you had best present yourself as the fortune teller's servant and then I will shine forth in my own colours. I will not give you any trouble. There's nothing so easy as to cheat people who want to be cheated

Laval There's some one coming now

De M Come out of sight – let us take an observation

Enter Coralie and Rose timidly

(*aside*) Tis she by Venus but plague on your fine ladies who cannot stir without their chamber maids. I must get rid of my charmer's follower somehow.

Laval (*aside*) Heavens it cannot be my Coralie. Yet how like! Could I only see her face (coming down)

Duet – Coralie and Rose[1]

When jealous Age begins to doze
Behind his bolted door,
And birds o'ertaken by repose
Make melody no more,
A village maid, with locks of gold,
Whose love is at the wars,
Steals forth to bribe the hermit old
To read for her the stars.
O! the stars!
There's mischief in the stars!
Come from thy cell, old oracle,
And read for us the stars!

Laval (*aside - reappearing.*)

If this be she, O! fortune strange!
To yield her thus to my revenge.

De Mericourt (*dragging him back.*)

Come with me, come, our plan to arrange.
Now, lady, look for something strange!

(*Exeunt.*

Coralie and Rose.

Is no one here? 'Tis very strange!
Perhaps our second verse may lure
The wizard from his den.

[1] This section was not included in the manuscript but was taken from the *Words of the Songs, Duets and Trios*. It is not clear exactly where it went but, possibly, it replaced the following line or two of dialogue.

Her father thinks she is asleep,
Her chamber safe within ;
Her mother, if she knew, would weep
In terror at the sin;

But fear no tender heart can bind,
And tyrants have no bars,
When weary hope expects to find
An answer from the stars.
O! the stars!
There's comfort in the stars!
Come from thy cell, old oracle,
And read for us the stars!

De M Come I must show you where to find your fortune teller's gear.
(*Exit*)

Coralie Nobody to receive us Rose. You foolish child, you are not frightened. Here's nothing you see to frighten a child. Just peep behind that curtain and tell me if anybody is coming.

Rose Frightened madam. I wish I knew what fear was! Strong minded women don't.

Coralie But I am not strong minded. I wish I was. Here I am, you see [a] girl with a heart still to let

Rose That's because you have not cleared out the old tenant Ma'am. Since you gave your cousin warning, you never laid yourself out to a new lodger fairly. You can't forget him you see and that's just it

Coralie Forget him - A spendthrift who only sought me for my fortune. I am ashamed that I cannot forget him. I am lowered in my own estimation

Enter Laval

Laval (*aside*) You are. Take care of yourself and your future then scornful lady**.{6b}** (*coming down between them*) What has induced Mlle de Blanchefleur to honor this poor house with her presence?

Coralie Discovered (*to Laval*) My mistress Sir wishes to speak to the famous fortune teller on business of importance

Laval (*aside*) Clumsily done (*to Rose*) Mdlle de Blanchefleur then will do us the honor and take a seat till my master is ready to receive her

Coralie Pray madam comply. Resistance here maybe dangerous you know

Laval (*aside*) A capital hint (to Rose) Mademoiselle you are now seated on a magic couch. Stir not or I will not answer for the consequences

Coralie Are we prisoners here Sir?

Laval 'Tis my Master's custom when he gives audience to ladies. There's a bouquet for you child (*giving flowers*)

Coralie Tell we something about your master Sir. Can he really show dead or distant people?

Laval That may depend on the time which has elapsed since people have died. Within seven years 'tis a matter of course

Coralie (*hastily*) 'Twas on the 17th of last December

Laval (*aside*) The day I was drowned. I hope you do not think of that good for nothing fellow who is drowned on that day.

Laval
You turn aside and tremble,
Lest I should tell you true ;
You purpose to dissemble,
Though I your heart look through.

Coralie (*aside*.)
How strangely is he reading
My secret heart within!
Where olden wounds are bleeding,
By mortal eye unseen.

Laval
Hear me! - Command me!
Mine arm - my love - my spell
(*Approaching her, and taking her hand*)
Shall shield you from disaster!

Coralie
Are you not man, but master?
Even if you were, unhand me!

Laval
Nay, do not fear me!
This hand shall not rebel!

Coralie
O let me go! nor press too near me!
(*Disengaging her hand*).
For, indeed, so firm you clasp it,
That its lines you cannot tell.

Coralie (*aside.*)
What means this sweet emotion
What charm retains me near him?!
Rightly, I ought to fear him,
Because his words are bold.
Like music far o'er ocean,
His tender voice enchants me.
Something there is that haunts me
With melodies of old.

{7a} Laval (*aside*)
What means her sweet emotion?
Dreams she who stands beside her?
Rightly, I ought to chide her,
Because she was so cold.
No! with a new devotion
My watchful eye shall save her
From craft that would enslave her,-
As in the days of old.

Coralie I know not what strange pleasing bewilderment it is that overcomes me but I am fainting Rose! We are going to Fairy Land

Rose If you are going to fascinate my lady into a fit, I'll not sit still and see it was I to be torn in pieces

Coralie I feel so happy (*falls into Rose's arms*)

Rose She's gone off into some terrible ecstasy or other. I see it by her eyes

Laval Listen you foolish woman. No harm shall come to your mistress

Rose No harm and she dropped off stone dead

De M (*without*) Raphael is all ready?

Laval In an instant master (*to Rose*) Command yourself, I tell you and don't shake. Go home as fast as you can and bring back her carriage and her servants, her safety may depend on it (*shows Rose out*)

Enter De Mericourt

De M What is this? The coast clear, the beauty asleep, my old playfellow has somewhat mistaken his commission **{7b} a**nd instead of merely quieting the waiting woman has removed her and put the flowers into the wrong hand. Madame de Mericourt that is to be, wake up and be wooed.
(*He approaches her with a phial, the bouquet drops from her hand and she begins to move and to awake dreamily*)

Coralie

O was I, then, awake or dreaming,
The hours of weary life between?!
So full of light, with joy so beaming,
Was yonder land where I have been.

I rose among the golden clouds of early morning,
I came where noon (loth treasure up her lustre burning,
And now, once more to duller earth returning,
Around me all is desolate and grey!-
O no! it was not only dreaming, -
The gladness *will* not pass away!

Methought I was the youngest fairy,
That bears the dew-drop on her wing ;
I heard a voice as Echo airy
Afar its joyous carol sing.
It told of merry holidays, the lime-houghs under,
When never thought we heart from heart could chill asunder.
And now I wake, in melancholy wonder,
And listen for that melody so gay!
O no! it was not only dreaming,
The music *will* not pass away!

Coralie Where am I. Rose come to me. Where are you?

De M Call no one daughter. The interview you have sought is granted you. You are in the presence of wisdom. Speak without reserve, no earthly witness is within hearing.

Laval (*appearing at back*) As true that is as most fortune teller's truths

Coralie I have brought with me, sir, an old family document which I have always assured concerned my parentage and my inheritance. No one has yet been able to decipher it (*aside*) How is it that I now feel such a sinking of the heart and reluctance. It is here. Will you read it for me? (*giving parchment*)

De M Read it, angelic Coralie, (*letting it drop*) No mouldy parchment will I read when such a bright pair of eyes are before me nor **{8a}** will I longer abuse your trust (throws off his mask (…?))

Coralie What does all this mean? Where am I?

De M In the company Mademoiselle de Blanchefleur of a man of honor who entreats you first to pardon the stratagem to which your obduracy has compelled him to have recourse

Coralie Monsieur de Mericourt

De M The same Mademoiselle. You have wearied me with delays and withheld encouragement due to my fervent passion. I have been forced into peremptory measures. In love all devices are lawful. We are alone and you must hear me

Coralie Sir how have I injured you? What right have you to address me thus? What have you to do with me or my errand? I came here -

De M To consult the famous fortune teller. I am he. There has been none other in this house saved myself and my magic. To what it has amounted? So a few tricks played off to frighten silly women and to pique your curiosity so as to allure you hither. You are come and I am a slave at your feet.

De Mericourt

You are bright as the rose that looks up to the sun,
When she feels that his light and her fragrance are one;
You are pure as the lily that even might grow
Without shame from a bank of the new-fallen snow ;
You are warm as the wind of the South, when she gives
A bloom to the grape, and a gold to its leaves ;-
Then, believe me, dear lady, young queen of the May!
It is you who have magic, and we who obey!

Could I lift up the veil for the tremblers that wait
Until shadow or sunshine shall alter their fate ;
Could I humble the proud, and the wandering guide ;
Could I read in your hand what your bosom would hide
Could I comfort despair, could I fathom deceit ;
Yet mine art with its spells, would I lay at your feet,
{8b} For, believe me, dear lady, too proud for disguise,
There is left no more magic, save that of your eyes!

Coralie (*aside*)

What mean his words! Alas! I fear!
Trembling, alone, defenceless here!

De Mericourt

Come, come! you will not prove severe!
Long have I loved, - you shall be mine!

Coralie

Go, leave me. Go, I will not hear!
Nor look, nor word, nor sigh, nor sign,
Deserves this jest!—I will begone!
(*Laval*, *appearing from behind the curtain*)

De Mericourt

It is no jest, sweet lady mine!
You will not leave this place alone ;
But as a joyous bride - The priest
Awaits you and the marriage feast.

Laval (a*side - coming down*.)
Ah! 'twas not love that brought her here!
A moment still observe, - forbear!

Coralie (*Escaping from De Mericourt*)
Leave me! - Release me! - Aid me! aid!

De Mericourt
None will obey thee!

Laval (*Coming between them.*)
Yes! - the dead!

Coralie
He lives! he lives! - O save me!
O tender recollection!
O pleasure blent with pain!
My heart was not in error
It knew his voice again!

Laval
She calls on my protection!
O hope, in spite of pain!
Her heart, in hour of terror,
Returns to me again!

De Mericourt.
Ah! of her cold rejection!
The secret cause is plain,
Her blushing features mirror
A joy, in spite of pain.

Laval Lady fear nothing. I will protect you. You shall go hence as free as you came.

De M Leave the lady, Sir. You protect her, a spendthrift, a gambler, a debtor who dare not show his face by daylight, **{9a}** a fortune teller who does not believe his own lies. You a lady's champion.

Laval Spare your ribaldry and for protection happily the lady needs neither you or me. Hark

Chorus without

Chorus Open up within (*violent knocking*)

De M Nay there is no need to break the door

Opens door – Enter Chorus and Rose

De Mericourt
Welcome, my friends! This way, this way!
Thank Heaven! you have not tarried long
Your lady there in safety see!

Chorus
We come to set our lady free
From miscreant who would do her wrong!

De Mericourt (*pointing to Laval*)
Seize on him! - seize the sorcerer,
The master of this magic den
'Twas he ensnared your lady dear,
With purpose vile!

Chorus (*laying hold on Laval*)
Come - come away!
We'll teach you how your tricks you play!

Coralie (*bewildered*)
Yet stay, O stay!
Ensnared by him - his death a lie!
What is the truth?! - O speak!

De Mericourt
'Tis I,
Who now the baffled knave display!
The famous sorcerer, seen by none,
Too well, methinks, to justice known!

{9b}

Stretto

Coralie
Was I ensnared for this?
Are these the witcheries
Here you display?!
Hence, dark impostor, hence!
Justice shall recompense
All who betray!

Laval
Yonder the wizard is,
Whose cruel witcheries
Sought you for prey!
Bear me to prison hence!
Truth shall be my defence
Another day!

De Mericourt
Nothing falls out amiss
E'en in a storm like this
Craft makes his way.
Hence, dark impostor, hence!
Justice shall recompense
All who betray

Rose and Chorus
One an impostor is!
Can it be that or this?
Which must I say?
Hence, evil wizard, hence!
Justice shall recompense
All who betray.

Coralie
Who speaks the truth? - I was asleep,
And strangely moved-

Laval (*to Rose*)
Can you deny?!

Rose
I vow my flesh is all a creep!
I saw my lady put to sleep,
And I, forsooth, was sent away!

Laval
Fool! answer! Did I nothing say?!
Bade nothing?

Rose
I was so afraid,
I never heard a word you / he said!

De Mericourt
Away with him, let justice try,
Which is the knave that man or I!

(*Stretto resumed*)

End of Act 1

{10a}

Act 2, Scene 1

A garden terrace belonging to the Chateau de BlancheFleur.
Enter Rose

De M Well, we are coming to something like a point at last. A month ago, who would have believed that my lady would ever consent to marry the Count de Mericourt. But there are no limits to a maid's perseverance and to my influence. I don't think she half likes him yet! Nobody does beforehand. Once let the settlements be signed and the marriage have taken place and she'll be more comfortable in her mind, poor thing. At all events what can be so depressing as having nothing going forward! It was beginning to wear me to a shadow!

Rose

The joy-bells are ringing, the flowers strew the way ;
The shepherds are jocund and idle ;
The Bride cometh forth, in her milk white array;
The sun shines his best for the bridal.
{10b} Oh ! blest is her fate, whether early or late,
Who lights on a mate with a noble estate,
And for each of the seasons its carriage ;
But though marriage, at last / alas ! is a desperate thing,
Without gold in the pocket, as well as the ring,
It, nevertheless, is a marriage.

And now the two kneel at the garlanded shrine,
Their hearts with full ecstacy beating ;
The youth is so gallant, the maid so divine,
There never was lovelier meeting.
Oh ! blest is her lot, in some vine-covered cot,
With a spouse who will not be too cold or too hot,
Or disdain, or distress, or disparage;
But though marriage, alas! is a sorrow the more,
Without love by the hearth, when the anthem is o'er,
It, nevertheless, is a marriage.

Enter Laval dressed as a priest

Laval (aside) As I hoped in time. And yonder is our truthful and courageous waiting maid. Will she know the fortune teller now I wonder. Let us try (*raising his voice*) Benedicte, child. Come hither wise and virtuous maiden let us speak with thee a moment

Rose (*turning round*)

Rose (*aside*) Wise and virtuous; How sweet sounds truth from holy lips! (*aloud*) What can I do for your reverence.

Laval (*aside*) I thought the black coat would do. (*aloud*) I'm here at the request of Monsieur de Blignac to witness the signing of some papers. Can I be allowed to speak with Mademoiselle de **{11a}** Blanchefleur before the ceremony?

Rose Impossible your reverence. She has been in too hypochondriacal fits today and is now laid down to sleep and to make up her mind to what is before her.

Laval What? What? Do you mean to say that she is dissatisfied with the choice, daughter

Rose Not particularly, Sir, but she's generally averse to the double state and a great blow we had a month since has given her nerves a shock from which we have not recovered. Count de Mericourt, Sir, is truly assiduous and says that when 'tis over she will be better. But for him, where should we have been now.

.

Laval Is it true then that your mistress has accepted him because he delivered her from a great danger?

Rose Gospel true[2], Sir. You see, Sir, we must **{11b}** needs go and consult the wicked one like all the other ladies of fashion. Pretty goings it was! My lady was thrown in a trance and has been never wholly her own mistress since. Then she lost a family paper of real consequence.

Laval But how do you know this.

Rose Know? I saw it with my eyes. They sat me in the chair that [sent?} such shocking cramps through me every time I tried to stir. My feet will never be themselves again! Then I was put out of the window heels uppermost and after that I recollect nothing till, thank Heaven, I saw the horrid Wizard dragged off to prison. That I did witness and safe he is still there and will continue, I hope, till he is burnt, if such as he will burn

Laval You saw the monster

Rose Distinctly, Sir, as I see you and I saw **{12a}** the Count denouncing him in the king's name. But for him what should we have don? And I tell my mistress so and she sighs. Ah, never mind gratitude is no bad basis and it will be a load off my mind when she is married. Does not your reverence think that a married woman's safer from the - somebody something[3] - than us poor lonely creatures?

Laval There can be no question of it, daughter. But I must still press for a moment's interview with Mademoiselle de Blanchefleur. (*aside*) If the money which succoured me in prison did come from her she cannot be meaning in earnest to marry this man!

Rose 'Tis out of the question. She's composing her mind to receive her intended and we expect him every moment (*a flourish of trumpets*). Hark those are his horns

{12b}

[2] The Examiner demanded that the phrase "Gospel true" be removed, *Lord Chamberlain's Day Book* Add. MS 53703
[3] It is not clear what was intended here, possibly some thing like "the devil", which Chorley thought the Examiner might disapprove of or maybe the idea was to put in a topical reference.

Laval Here then child, here are 10 Louis for thee. Wait. On him there (…?) (…?) the disclosure burst the first

Rose Now sir, what can I do for you I must be gone

Laval When the Count de Mericourt comes, before he sees my lady, give him this letter, make him read it. It will [avert?] a great evil hanging over him. And more do not tell him from whence thou had'st it. Should'st thou fail, there may be other horns at the wedding besides those of the Count de Mericourt – horns and a tail and the great wizard in person. Make the slightest mistake and I will not answer for the consequences - remember (*aside*) So my capricious cousin let me see if I cannot save you a second time

{13a} (*Exit*)

Rose What a voice. I protest it reminds me of that horrid monster the fortune teller. I'm so bewildered I don't know where I am but I'll do what the good man bade me come what will. My lady shall see the letter ere she sees her intended. She shall see it at once

(*Exit*)

(*Enter de Mericourt*)

Aria – De Mericourt

How merry is morning, how bright is the sun !
How great is my triumph, the prize to have won
When I think of the swains that will elegies sigh,
And the pride of the army of rage that will die
As they count up the treasures they never may spend.
For their cooing and wooing is come to an end!
Then I laugh and may well at my victory bold.
Let who will take the love, so I but take the gold !
She frowned and grew cruel, so I grew unkinder ;
Her eye never slept but 'twas easy to blind her ;
She owned her poor heart might be roaming astray.
{13b} I took care that the object kept out of the way !
Come one, and come all, you may envy my joy,
But will not win the like, though for ages you try !
I laugh and may well etc.
How merry is morning, &c

De M What have we here? O, our wives and loyal tenantry that are to be! Capital young fellows! Charming girls! – pinks – I may say carnations to reign over dear creature. How thoughtful of her to have got up in charming style to do me honour.

Chorus and Dance
Peasants' Round and Dialogue

Let pipe and let tabor go merrily round ;
Nor music nor measure this morning shall fail.
The old castle echoes rejoice in the sound,
As we the expected one joyfully hail !

Dance we around him !
Taking our part in the good and the gay day ;
Merrily greet him
Happy the chosen of such a fair lady !

{14a}

Enter Rose

Rose Good morrow. Pray, Sir, a moment! Good people, I must speak to the Count. (*To De M*) I've a letter I have promised you will read without delay

'Tis a letter I have promised
You will read without delaying,
On a matter too important
For neglecting or for staying.
If you slight it, you will rue it,
When repentance is too late.
He who gave it said 'twould save you
From an unexpected fate.

De Mericourt
Interruption little welcome,
Did it bring a double fortune.
Let me see who dare intrude
Upon my happy hours of courting.
Some petition from a beauty,
Coming half an hour too late !
Since, to-day I sign and swear me
To the sober married state.

Chorus (*interrupted*)
Let pipe and let tabor etc.

They make a ring and dance round De Mericourt

{14b} *De Mericourt finds it difficult to read the letter.*

The heiress! … I must discover this!
The heiress! … Make way I say, make way

Rose (*alone*) O dear! O dear! What can all this mean. There's something very terrible in that letter or my name's not Rose but Bachelors Nuillon(?)[4]. What a mercy my Lady was honourable and would not look at it! Delicacy does answer sometimes! If there should be witchcraft in it (*Enter Laval at back*) Ah (*screaming*) Don't come here to enchant us – who let you out? Go away! Go away! We have plenty of strong men to protect us! People! People!
(*runs out calling*)

Laval (*laughing*) The coat it seems makes all the difference betwixt Priest and imposter with my Lady's waiting woman. What fools fear makes of us! But am I so wise just now? Am I so courageous? **{15a}** That it was Coralie who sent money to pay

[4] Possibly a reference to Bachelors Bouillon a stock used in cooking

her poor vagabond relation's debts I cannot doubt. That it was done in secret argues that, while she pities, she will not forgive me. But then yonder idiot seemed to imply that she did not care for this man! And now that by chance the tables are turned and her great fortune all turns to nothing. Will he care for her? Supposing I am wrong, supposing they will be true to one another then why that would a gentleman profit by an accident to spoil the woman he had loved. I may have been wild but I will not be a scoundrel. Let us see however how my Lady's heart beats

Laval (song)

Ah ! since the sun began his roving,
Were ne'er two hearts so true and loving,
As ours, ere evil powers deceiving
{15b} Did cast a shadow o'er the twain.
Will nothing, now, restore us
The heaven that bright shone o'er us ?
Is all too late my bitter grieving
Is all atonement, then, in vain 1—
Ah ! since the sun began his roving,
Were ne'er two hearts so true and loving.
O violet ! tell her bosom heaving,
That May is coming round again !

Her eye has priceless gems within it ;
Her heart is heaven, and who shall win it ?
O'er sea and land, o'er hills and valleys,
Her beauty holds its matchless reign.
O! why was Fate unkindly ?
O ! how could folly blindly
Divide us with its idle malice?
To me the shame, to her the pain! –
Ah ! since the sun began his roving,
Were ne'er two hearts so true and loving !
O, woodbird, sing around her palace,
That May is coming round again !

Enter Coralie

Coralie Who was that singing? What is it I see or am I in a trance, Sundays, holidays and week**{16a}** Why cousin Frederick! Nay keep your distance. I protest I am terrified and have twenty minds to faint. Come back to Paris! Is it really you? Are you not really dead after all.

Laval (*aside*) O coquette, coquette (*to her*) The same Coralie at your service. Your old disrespectable poor relation. Who was dead till a good for nothing fortune teller got him up out of his coffin for a capricious lady of quality who wanted something handsome to look at.

Coralie (*aside*)Can he have found out that I sent to him in prison (*to him*) Well I cannot compliment you on your good looks you are grown grave if not gray. Don't you find me changed too

Laval (*forgetting himself*) Lovelier, brighter than ever, dear Coralie

{16b}

Coralie That is in honour of the occasion. Have you seen any of my people? Have they told you what is going to happen today? What could have brought you here? Drowned men are particularly inconvenient at family parties - they are apt to throw cold water on what may be going on

Laval I am grave because I am here on serious business

Coralie Then I've no time nor spirits to listen to you. Can you tell me what has become of the fortune teller who got you up again head. Somebody said he was in prison.

Laval Do you wish to make me ashamed of my folly cousin? Blush I never so ever when I am found out! And can you tell me who the lady was who sent the vagabond money when he was in prison. Somebody said there was a lady - Why what makes you red

Coralie Cousin Frederick

{17a}

Laval Do not be alarmed. She wished to succour an old playfellow and to disown the poor relation. I can't understand it. But talking of the fortune teller, can you tell me what became of the parchment dropped by the lady in the fortune teller's house the night he was sent to prison?

Coralie Did you find it?

Laval I did and what was more while I was in prison I deciphered it. Chancing to hold it to the fire, letter after letter and line after line appeared

Coralie And what did it mean

Laval Your family friend and notary M. de Blignac will tell you in due time Coralie - not I. The paper is in his hands and it is owing to his exertions I am here - here in time, I am told, to witness your marriage settlement

Coralie So it seems Cousin (*aside*) He takes it very coolly

Laval That which has happened to me during the last **{17b}** month has changed me much. I shall give you no more cause to blush for me. But I will not pain you by recurring to the past. You have done wisely in securing for yourself a more unselfish orderly protector then I could have been and as matters are now tis too late too late.

Coralie Who says that anything is secure nowadays when drowned folk come back and talk as solemnly as so many preachers.

Laval Then you have not determined to marry De Mericourt, cousin

Coralie Who dares to say that? Perhaps I will, perhaps I will not.

Laval But he is expected every minute to claim you

Coralie Suppose I deny the claim. No man is sure of me till we come away from the altar. 'Tis a duty with every young woman to take care of herself in these days of magic mesmerism when fortune tellers **{18a}** turn out no one knows what

Laval How am I to understand all this? Here comes de Mericourt and de Blignac. The man is not so mercenary then as I thought him to be (aloud) Well Madlle de Blanchefleur I will now take my departure and leave you to better company May the man whom you have chosen make you happy. Heaven keep you and farewell

Coralie Stay! Stay! I can't spare you yet cousin. I will have you stay to see justice done

Enter De Mericourt and de Blignac

Rose And I say stay too! No one can spare you, you horrid fortune teller! You can't discern Madam what a chase I had to find M de Mericourt and M. de Blignac. But here they are Madam and you are safe and the people will be here to in another second! He has not put you to sleep again, Madam, I hope and trust.

Coralie Silly child - how very little magic is sufficient to turn a waiting maid's head. I suspect that **{18b}** we have all we have been all mystified in a certain fortune teller's house which I was foolish enough to pass an hour a month ago. Let us each do what we can to get out of the mist. My part is to present an old friend and near relation of mine M de Chevalier Frederick de Blanchefleur, Monsieur the Count de Mericourt

(*Laval crossing to M de Blignac*)

Laval And mine is to ask whether you have acquainted M de Mericourt with the contents of a certain parchment.

De Blignac I have

Laval (*aside*) Now then comes my best trial (*crossing to Coralie*) And do you wish me still to remain to act as becomes your relative on this occasion

Coralie **{19a}** Oh remain, Frederick, remain

Trio

De Mericourt (*aside*)
Her former lover, or mine ears deceive me !
Let this from my embarrassment relieve me !

Laval (*to de Mericourt*)
O worthy of that lovely lady yonder,
No ill report of fortune changed can fright you,
If she be fond, your generous love is fonder ;
May Heaven with many days of bliss requite you!

De Mericourt (*aside*)
He thinks he can shame me
By irony clever !
But she loved me never,
And now will not blame me.

Laval (*to de Mericourt*)
O! happy was the morning when you won her,
And blest her with your heart so brave and tender ;
You seek her still, when meaner men would shun her,
And in her altered fortunes will befriend her.

De Mericourt (*aside*)
How to frame it ? how to say it ?
'Tis my part, and I must play it.
Let the hero win and wear her,
Who did defend her.

{19b}

Laval
The contract waits you.

De Mericourt (*to Laval*)
Your haste deceives you ;
(*aside.*) It shall be so.

Coralie
He pauses !
(*aside*, *looking at Laval*)
And will he thus, when now he might have won me,
So tamely then my hand and heart surrender ?

Laval
Is all prepared?

Blignac.
The testaments are these !

Rose

And here in merry mood the witnesses.

Enter Chorus

Chorus

Come to Beauty's festival,
And crown her with your garlands gay ;
And may her wedded years be all
As bright as her betrothing day.

Blignac

And now to sign.

De Mericourt

Stay - and first hear me speak,
To my own ruin, though my heart do break !
(*To Chorus)*
Give me no welcome friends - to me no joy ;
A dark and dreary sacrifice is mine !
(*To Coralie)*.
Thought you I could by my poor claims annoy
My heart's dear angel e'en for bliss divine ?
{20a} Your promise loathing now, my passion scorning,
I can protect and pleasure you no more.
To your old lover is your love returning.
Take him, bright lady ; my Life's dream is o'er.

Coralie

Refused by him—set free !

Rose

O ! dismal change.

Laval (*aside*)

Now, lady, for my triumph and revenge.

Chorus

What means he by -his look of sorrow strange ?

Concerted piece

De Mericourt

Yes, though my heart is breaking,
I would no more retain you,
Who find that memories chain you,
To him you loved of yore.-
O bitter hour of waking
Let no past vows confine you,
For sadly I resign you,
And life and light are o'er.

Coralie
Can I be dreaming!
Resign me !

Laval
Resign you !
{20b} (*aside*.) O! nobly seeming.

Coralie
And we are bound no more !

Rose and Chorus
And thus the contract's o'er !

Laval Charming cousin, I am glad to see you bear being refused so lightly, but you will need it even less when you know the whole truth. It is not you whom M de Mericourt refuses but the chateau and the treasure of Blanchefleur having learned in time to prevent him from fulfilling rash engagements. That deeds have been found proving that they were bequeathed to another, that you are not the heiress he had sworn to marry.

Coralie No heiress Frederick

Rose No heiress. We shall faint!

Laval No heiress, 'tis true.. I told you, Coralie, how the fire read for me the letters on the parchment which puzzled the fortune teller. It was simply a direction to a secret repository in yonder house where our grandfather's will was to be found. M. Blignac searched. It is there. You will find **{21a}** that the earlier document which disinherited my father was booked and that you are not the heiress. This news I conveyed to M. de Mericourt.

Coralie And you inherit instead, Frederick. What a waste you will make

Laval It is already gone forestalled, every acre, every penny of it, save just as much as will buy me the sword. You did not suppose that vagabond as I have been, I would spoil a woman and that woman my Coralie? No darling cousin. But it was as well to see how your betrothed digested the first piece of news ere he was offered the second to the effect that the same fortune teller who took away all your gold and lands, brought them back again.

Coralie But Cousin. But you know that the fortune teller brought back something else beside a fortune. I will not take the land without a master. You know 'tis the Count de Mericourt's wish and you owe him some reparation!

{21b}
Laval Are you in earnest Coralie?

Rose Why then we may still sign today. It is only changing a name, M. Blignac, (*passing De M with a toss*) I always said my mistress would have a happy loss of you, Sir!

Coralie & Laval So ends the mystery of our fortune teller

De M And thus have I been cheated?

Laval Perchance your magic
May other fortunes find

Chorus (*As before.)*
Come to Beauty's festival ! &c.

Coralie, Laval and Chorus
So ends the mystery of our fortune-telling.

De Mericourt
And thus have I been cheated ?

Coralie, Laval and Chorus
Perchance your magic may other fortunes find.

De Mericourt
Mocked and defeated !
Have I been deaf and blind ?
May others cheat you.

Coralie, Laval and Chorus
Nay, stay, we entreat you,
Our gladness to partake ;
'Twas all your doing.

Rose.
Is this not magic,
From which we are to wake 7

De Mericourt
May wreck and ruin
Your fortunes overtake !
(*Exit.*

Chorus
Long live our noble lord and lady !
Bright be their fortunes, long their line !
No gladder people e'er were ready
Love's bond of happiness to sign.

Rondo

Coralie with Chorus

O joy ! - all other joys above !
Is hour so blest as this !
When new-born faith and olden love
Unite in perfect bliss

End