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Karel Jaromír Erben (1811-1870)

THE DAUGHTER'S CURSE

Why has such grief come over thee,
Daughter mine ?

Why has such grief come over thee ?
Blithesome it was thy wont to be,
Now thy mirth has taken flight.

A poor, wee dovelet's life I've taken,
Mother mine.

A poor, wee dovelet's life I've taken,—
It was a nestling, lone, forsaken,
And it was as snow so white.

This no dovelet could have been,
Daughter mine.

This no dovelet could have been,
A change has come upon thy mien,
And thy gaze is all awry.

O, 'twas a tiny babe I slew,
Mother mine.

O, 'twas a tiny babe I slew.
'Twas my own poor suckling, too,
With pangs of sorrow I could die.

And what is thy purpose now,
Daughter mine ?

And what is thy purpose now ?
How for the guilt atone, and how
Canst thou the wrath of God appease !

I shall go that flower to seek,
Mother mine.

I shall go that flower to seek,

Which can quell much guilt, and eke
Throes of heated blood can ease.

And where wilt thou this flower discover,
Daughter mine ?
And where wilt thou this flower discover ?
Where, O where the wide world over,
In what garden does it grow ?

Beyond that gate above the mound,
Mother mine.
Beyond that gate above the mound,
Where a pole with a nail is found,
And a hempen gallows-rope below.

And what is thy message to the swain,
Daughter mine ?
And what is thy message to the swain,
Who sought our dwelling oft and again,
And did take his joy with thee ?

Blessing unto him I send,
Mother mine,
Blessing unto him I send,—
A worm in his soul until his end,
For basely thus betraying me.

And what to thy mother wilt thou render,
Daughter mine ?
And what to thy mother wilt thou render,
She whose love for you was tender,
And who dearly cherished thee ?

A curse to thee is my bequest,
Mother mine.
A curse to thee is my bequest,
That in the grave thou find no rest,
For the wayward will thou gavest me.

The Garland (1853)