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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)