

To Err Is Human, To Forgive, Divine - song lyrics

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To Err Is Human, to Forgive, Divine.
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Words and Music by Felix McGlennon.

Craving, craving for pity, a brother stands
Before the brother be wronged in days gone by;
"Help me, help me, forgive all the painful past;
I'm starving, brother, oh, help me or I die."
One is poor and lowly, one has shilling gold.
The wealthy brother looks with scornful eyes--
Will he help the suppliant, will he e'er forgive?
Oh, hearken to his words as he replies:

Chorus.

"I once was poor and struggling, you were honored in the land,
I once was nearly starving, you had riches at command,
I went to you so humbly And I asked a helping hand,
In my face you closed your door, oh, brother mine.
Now I am rich and you are poor, shall I revengeful be?
No, for the sake of old times, when we prayed at mother's knee,
You're still my brother-I forgive, share my prosperity,
To err is human, to forgive, divine."

Brooding, brooding alone in a darkened room,
A poor old father is mourning for his child;
Sadly, sadly he thinks of the daughter fair
Who by the tempter from home has been beguiled.
His eyes grow hot with tears, his heart grows hot with rags.
He thinks of how the base betrayer came:
A knock, the door is opened, his erring child is there,
And to the floor she sinks in abject shame.

Chorus.

"Begone and quit my sight," he cries In accents stern and grim.
"You've streaked my hair with gray that day you fled away with him.
You broke your poor old mother's heart, her eyes in death are dim;
Begone, you are no longer child of mine."
But his heart goes back with anguish to the child that he loved best,
The daughter fair and stainless, ere she left the parents' nest.
And for her dear, dead mother's sake, he clasps her to his breast-
To err is human, to forgive, divine.

Stitching, stitching, in poverty and In pain,
A woman's toiling in earn her children bread;
Daily, hourly, the needle ne'er seems to tire-
All, slaves must work, and their children must be fed.
See her drunken husband staggering in the room-
"Curse you, give me money, I must drink;
Come now, give the money, money, quick, I say"-
A blow, a kick, unconscious see her sink.

Chorus.

In drink-besotted marines*, he rains on her kicks and blows
"Till she lies there slowly dying-soon will end her earthly woes,
And she feebly murmur, "Harry, oh, It darker, darker grows."
Then she babbles of the love of "auld lang syne."
Crash! the officers of justice burst the door into the room;
Will she speak the word and send her husband to a murderer's doom?
No, she loves him still, and silent hears her secret to the tomb-