

# Ostler Joe - song lyrics

American Old-time song lyrics from [www.traditionalmusic.co.uk](http://www.traditionalmusic.co.uk)

OSTLER JOE.

By Geo. R. Sims.

I stood at eve when the sun went down,  
By a grave where a woman lies,  
Who lured men's souls to the shores of sin  
With the light of her wanton eyes;  
Who sang the song that the siren sang  
On the treacherous Lurley height;  
Whose face was as fair as a Summers day,  
And whose heart was as black as night.

Yet a blossom I fain would pluck to-day  
From the garden above her dust-  
Not the languorous lily of soulless sin,  
Nor the blood red rose of lust-  
But a sweet white blossom of holy love  
That grew in that one green spot  
In the arid desert of Phyrne's life  
Where all else was parched and hot.

In the Summer, when the meadows  
Were aglow with blue and red,  
Joe, the ostler of "The Magpie,"  
And fair Annie Smith were wed.  
Plump was Annie, plump and pretty,  
With a face as fair as snow;  
He was anything but handsome,  
Was the "Magpie's " ostler, Joe.

But he won the winsome lassie;  
They'd a cottage and a cow-  
And her matronhood sat lightly.  
On the village beauty's brow.  
Sped the months, and came a baby-  
Such a blue-eyed baby boy!  
Joe was working in the stables  
When they told him of his joy.

He was nibbing down the horses-  
Gave them, then and there,  
All a special feed of clover,  
Just in honor of his heir.  
It had been his great ambition  
(And he told the horses so)  
That the fates would send a baby  
Who might bear the name of Joe.

Little Joe, the child was christened,  
And like babies grew apace.  
He'd his mother's eyes of azure,  
And his father's honest face.  
Swift the happy years went over.  
Years of blue and cloudless sky;  
Love was lord of that small cottage  
And the tempest passed them by.

Down the lane by Annie's cottage,  
Chanced a gentleman to roam;  
He caught a glimpse of Annie  
In her bright and happy home.  
Thrice he came and saw her sitting  
By the window with her child;  
And he nodded to the baby,  
And the baby laughed and smiled.

So at last it grew to know him

From the music archive at [www.traditionalmusic.co.uk](http://www.traditionalmusic.co.uk)

(Little Joe was nearly four)  
He would call the pretty "gemplum"  
As he passed the open door,  
And one day he ran and caught him  
And in child's play pulled her in;  
And the baby Joe had prayed for,  
Brought about the mother's sin.

'Twas the same old wretched story,  
That for ages bards have sung;  
'Twas a woman, weak and wanton,  
And a villain's tempting tongue;  
'Twas a picture deftly painted  
For a silly creature's eyes,  
Of the Babylonian wonders  
And the joy that in them lies.

Annie listened and was tempted-  
Was tempted and she fell,  
As the angels fell from Heaven  
To the blackest depth of hell,  
She was promised wealth and splendor  
And a life of genteel sloth;  
Yellow gold, for child and husband-  
And the woman left them both.

Home one eve, came Joe, the 'ostler,  
With a cheery cry of "wife!"  
Finding that which blurred forever  
All the story of his life,  
She had left a silly letter,  
Through the cruel scrawl he spelt,  
Then he sought the lonely bed-room.  
Joined his horny hands and knelt.

"Now, O Lord, O God, forgive her,  
For she ain't to blame," he cried;  
"For I ought to seen her trouble  
And a gone away and died.  
Why a girl like her-God bless her-  
'Twasn't likely as her'd rest  
With her bonny head forever  
On a 'ostler's ragged vest.

It was kind o' her to bear with me  
All the long and happy time;  
So for my sake please to bless her.  
Though you count her deed a crime,  
If so be I don't pray proper,  
Lord, forgive me, for you see  
I can talk all right to 'osses,  
But I'm kind o' strange with Thee."

Ne'er a line came to the cottage,  
From the woman who had flown.  
Joe, the baby, died that Winter,  
And the man was left alone.  
Ne'er a bitter word he uttered,  
But in silence kissed the rod,  
Saving what he told his horses,  
Saving what he told his God.

Far away in mighty London  
Rose the wanton into fame.  
For her beauty won men's homage,  
And she prospered in her shame.  
Quick from lord to lord she flitted,  
Higher still each prize she won;  
And her rivals paled beside her  
As the stars beside the sun.  
Next she trod the stage half naked,

And she dragged a temple down  
To the level of a market  
For the women of the town.  
And the kisses she had given  
To poor 'ostler Joe for naught  
With their gold and priceless jewels,  
Rich and titled roues bought

Went the years with flying footsteps  
While her star was at its height;  
Then the darkness came on swiftly,  
And the gloaming turned to night.  
Shattered strength and faded beauty  
Tore the laurels from her brow;  
Of the thousands who had worshipped,  
Never one come near her now.

Broken down in health and fortune,  
Men forgot her very name  
'Till the news that she was dying  
Woke the echoes of her fame.  
And the papers in their gossip  
Mentioned how an actress lay  
Sick to death in humble lodgings,  
Growing weaker every day.

One there was who read the story  
In a far off country place;  
And that night the dying woman  
Woke and looked upon his face,  
Once again the strong arms clasped bar  
That had clasped her long ago;  
And the weary head lay pillowed,  
Upon the breast of 'ostler Joe.

All the past he had forgiven-  
All the sorrow and the shame;  
He had found her sick and lonely,  
And his wife he now could claim.  
Since the grand folks who had known her  
One and all had slunk away,  
He could clasp his long lost darling  
And no man could say him nay.

In his arms death found her lying,  
From his arms her spirit fled.  
And his tears came down in torrents  
As he knelt beside his dead.  
Never once his love had faltered  
Through her sad, unhallowed life,  
And the stone above her ashes  
Bears the sacred name of wife.

That's the blossom I fain would pluck to-day  
From the garden above her dust;  
Not the languorous lily- of soulless sin  
Nor the blood red rose of lust,  
But a sweet white blossom of holy love,  
That grew in the one green spot  
In the arid desert of Phyrne's life  
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