

Wellerisms

Celebrating the linguistic pearls of Sam Weller and his father

The colorful dialogue of [Sam Weller](#) and his father, [Tony](#), in *Pickwick Papers* is peppered with what have become known as Wellerisms. The Oxford English Dictionary gives the following definition...

Wellerism /'welərɪzəm/ *noun*. Also **w-**. M19.

[from Samuel Weller or his father, two characters in Dickens's *Pickwick Papers* + -ISM.]

A form of humorous comparison in which a familiar saying or proverb is identified with something said by a person in a specified but inapposite situation.

Wellerisms found in *The Pickwick Papers*

'Then the next question is, what the devil do you want with me, as the man said, wen he see the ghost?'

'That's the pint, sir,' interposed Sam; 'out with it, as the father said to his child, when he swallowed a farden'

'Here's your servant, Sir. Proud o' the title, as the living skellinton said, ven they show'd him'



Samuel Weller

'There's nothin' so refreshen' as sleep, sir, as the servant girl said afore she drank the egg-cupful of laudanum'

'If you walley my precious life don't upset me, as the gen'l'm'n said to the driver when they was a-carryin' him to Tyburn'

'Now, gen'l'm'n, "fall on," as the English said to the French when they fixed bagginets'

'That's what I call a self-evident proposition, as the dog's-meat man said, when the housemaid told him he warn't a gentleman'

'How are you, ma'am?' said Mr Weller. 'Wery glad to see you, indeed, and hope our acquaintance may be a long 'un, as the gen'l'm'n said to the fi' pun' note'

'All good feelin', sir--the wery best intentions, as the gen'l'm'n said ven he run away from his wife 'cos she seemed unhappy with him,'

'There; now we look compact and comfortable, as the father said ven he cut his little boy's head off, to cure him o' squintin''

'Nev'r mind, Sammy,' replied Mr Weller, 'it'll be a wery agonisin' trial to me at my time of life, but I'm pretty tough, that's vun consolation, as the wery old turkey remarked wen the farmer said he was afeerd he should be obliged to kill him for the London market'

'So I take the privilidge of the day, Mary, my dear--as the gen'l'm'n in difficulties did, ven he valked out of a Sunday'

'Oh, quite enough to get, Sir, as the soldier said ven they ordered him three hundred and fifty lashes'

'Hooroar for the principle, as the money-lender said ven he vouldn't renew the bill'

'Vich I call addin' insult to injury, as the parrot said ven they not only took him from his native land, but made him talk the English langwidge arterwards'

'It must be somethin' wery uncommon indeed, as could perduce a letter out o' any friend o' mine,' replied Sam, shaking his head dubiously; 'nothin' less than a nat'ral conwulsion, as the young gen'l'm'n observed ven he was took with fits'

'It's a great deal more in your way than mine, as the gen'l'm'n on the right side o' the garden vall said to the man on the wrong un, ven the mad bull vos a-comin' up the lane'

'Come, Sir, this is rayther too rich, as the young lady said when she remonstrated with the pastry-cook, arter he'd sold her a pork pie as had got nothin' but fat inside'

'If this don't beat cock-fightin' nothin' never vill, as the lord mayor said, ven the chief secretary o' state proposed his missis's health arter dinner'

'P'raps if vun of us was to brush, without troubling the man, it 'ud be more agreeable for all parties, as the schoolmaster said when the young gentleman objected to being flogged by the butler'

'I think I see your drift; and if I do see your drift, it's my 'pinion that you're a-comin' it a great deal too strong, as the mail-coachman said to the snowstorm, ven it overtook him'

'He's a malicious, bad-disposed, worl'dly-minded, spiteful, vindictive creetur, with a hard heart as there ain't no soft'nin', as the virtuous clergyman remarked of the old gen'l'm'n with

the dropsy, ven he said, that upon the whole he thought he'd rayther leave his property to his vife than build a chapel vith it'

'Avay vith melincholly, as the little boy said ven his schoolmissus died'

'Set down, Sir, ve make no extra charge for settin' down, as the king remarked wen he blowed up his ministers'

'I should think they had,' exclaimed Mr Weller, surveying his companion's rags with undisguised wonder. 'This is rayther a change for the worse, Mr Trotter, as the gen'l'm'n said, wen he got two doubtful shillin's and sixpenn'orth o' pocket-pieces for a good half-crown'

'If you know'd who was near, sir, I rather think you'd change your note; as the hawk remarked to himself vith a cheerful laugh, ven he heerd the robin-redbreast a-singin' round the corner'

'I only assisted natur, ma'am; as the doctor said to the boy's mother, after he'd bled him to death'

'Sorry to do anythin' as may cause an interruption to such wery pleasant proceedin's, as the king said wen he dissolved the parliament'

'Wotever is, is right, as the young nobleman sweetly remarked wen they put him down in the pension list 'cos his mother's uncle's vife's grandfather vunce lit the king's pipe vith a portable tinder-box'

'It wos to be--and wos, as the old lady said arter she'd married the footman'