

A land that distant tyrants hate in vain,  
In Britain's isle, beneath a George's reign.

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THE POET, THE OYSTER, AND SENSITIVE  
PLANT.

AN Oyster cast upon the shore  
Was heard, though never heard before;  
Complaining in a speech well worded,  
And worthy thus to be recorded :

Ah hapless wretch ! condemned to dwell  
For ever in my native shell,  
Ordain'd to move when others please,  
Not for my own content or ease,  
But tofs'd and buffeted about,  
Now *in* the water, and now *out*.

'Twere better to be born a stone  
Of ruder shape and feeling none,

Than



Than with a tendernefs like mine,  
 And fenfibilities fo fine ;  
 I envy that unfeeling ſhrub,  
 Faſt-rooted againſt ev'ry rub.  
 The plant he meant grew not far off,  
 And felt the sneer with ſcorn enough,  
 Was hurt, diſguſted, mortified,  
 And with aſperity replied.

When cry the botaniſts, and ſtare,  
 Did plants call'd ſenſitive grow there ?  
 No matter when—a poet's muſe is  
 To make them grow juſt where ſhe chuſes.

You ſhapeleſs nothing in a diſh,  
 You that are but almoſt a fiſh,  
 I ſcorn your coarſe inſinuation,  
 And have moſt plentiful occaſion  
 To wiſh myſelf the rock I view,  
 Or ſuch another dolt as you.  
 For many a grave and learned clerk,  
 And many a gay unletter'd ſpark,

With



With curious touch examines me,  
 If I can feel as well as he;  
 And when I bend, retire and shrink,  
 Says, well—'tis more than one would think—  
 Thus life is spent, oh fie upon't!  
 In being touch'd, and crying, don't.

A poet in his evening walk,  
 O'erheard and check'd this idle talk.  
 And your fine sence, he said, and yours,  
 Whatever evil it endures,  
 Deserves not, if so soon offended,  
 Much to be pitied or commended.  
 Disputes though short, are far too long,  
 Where both alike are in the wrong;  
 Your feelings in their full amount,  
 Are all upon your own account.

You in your grotto-work inclos'd  
 Complain of being thus expos'd,  
 Yet nothing feel in that rough coat,  
 Save when the knife is at your throat,

Wherever



Wherever driv'n by wind or tide,  
Exempt from every ill beside.

And as for you, my Lady Squeamish,  
Who reckon ev'ry touch a blemish,  
If all the plants that can be found  
Embellishing the scene around,  
Should droop and wither where they grow,  
You would not feel at all, not you.  
The noblest minds their virtue prove  
By pity, sympathy, and love,  
These, these are feelings truly fine,  
And prove their owner half divine.

His censure reach'd them as he dealt it,  
And each by shinking shew'd he felt it.