



## **The Works Of Alexander Pope Esq.**

In Nine Volumes Complete. With His Last Corrections, Additions, And Improvements; As they were delivered to the Editor a little before his Death

Containing The First of his Letters

**Pope, Alexander**

**London, 1751**

VI. Some reasons why friendships may be contracted between persons of unequal years, and the advantage of such friendships.

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**Nutzungsbedingungen**

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## LETTER VI.

April 30, 1705.

I Cannot contend with you : You must give me leave at once to wave all your compliments, and to collect only this in general from them, that your design is to encourage me. But I separate from all the rest that paragraph or two, in which you make me so warm an offer of your Friendship. Were I possessed of that, it would put an end to all those speeches with which you now make me blush ; and change them to wholesome advices, and free sentiments, which might make me wiser and happier. I know 'tis the general opinion, that friendship is best contracted betwixt persons of equal age ; but I have so much interest to be of another mind, that you must pardon me if I cannot forbear telling you a few notions of mine, in opposition to that opinion.

In the first place 'tis observable, that the love we bear to our friends, is generally caused by our finding the same dispositions in them, which we feel in ourselves. This is but self-love at the bottom : whereas the affection betwixt people of different ages cannot well be so, the inclinations of such being commonly various. The friendship of two young men is often occasioned



caſioned by love of pleaſure or voluptuouſneſs, each being deſirous for his own ſake of one to aſſiſt or encourage him in the courſes he purſues ; as that of two old men is frequently on the ſcore of ſome profit, lucre, or deſign upon others. Now, as a young man who is leſs acquainted with the ways of the world, has in all probability leſs of intereſt ; and an old man, who may be weary of himſelf, has, or ſhould have leſs of ſelf-love ; ſo the friendship between them is the more likely to be true, and unmixed with too much ſelf-regard. One may add to this, that ſuch a friendship is of greater uſe and advantage to both ; for the old man will grow gay and agreeable to pleaſe the young one ; and the young man more diſcreet and prudent by the help of the old one : ſo it may prove a cure of thoſe epidemical diſeaſes of age and youth, ſourneſs and madneſs. I hope you will not need many arguments to convince you of the poſſibility of this ; one alone abundantly ſatiſfies me, and convinces to the heart ; which is, that <sup>a</sup> young as I am, and old as you are, I am your entirely affectionate, &c.

<sup>a</sup> Mr. Wycherley was at this time about ſeventy years old,  
Mr. Pope under ſeventeen. P.