

# **AN ESSAY ON FRIENDSHIP**

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An Essay On Friendship by Percival Andree Pickering

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**PERCIVAL ANDREE PICKERING**

**AN ESSAY ON  
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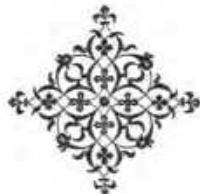
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BY  
PERCIVAL ANDREE PICKERING, M.A., Q.C.,  
LATE FELLOW OF ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE,  
CAMBRIDGE.



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## AN ESSAY ON FRIENDSHIP.

**I**F a man have not a friend he may quit the stage," says Bacon, in his "Essay on Friendship;" and yet how few comparatively have such a treasure, or, if they have had it, have been able to preserve it through life, though there may have been no blame to cast on any one for the loss. The friendships of boyhood often cease with manhood; and time, circumstances, change of position, and mode of life necessarily interfere with, if they do not altogether



destroy, that occasional intercourse without which friendship can rarely be said to exist. The friendship of boyhood frequently approaches more nearly to love, and is pursued with a passionate fondness which youth and beauty often inspire, even where no similarity of taste or disposition exists. "My school-friendships (writes Byron) were with me *passions* (for I was always violent), but I do not know that there is one which has endured (to be sure some have been cut short by death) till now. That with Lord Clare begun one of the earliest and lasted longest, being only interrupted by distance, that I know of. I never hear the word 'Clare' without a beating of the heart even *now*, and I write with the feelings of 1803, 4, 5, *ad infinitum*."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "Moore's Life of Byron." Paris edit. 1831, p. 15.

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The illustrious author of "Coningsby" has truly described the nature and character of a school-boy friendship, as every one who has experienced such a friendship can well testify. He writes thus: "At school friendship is a passion. It entrances the being; it tears the soul. All loves of after-life can never bring its rapture or its wretchedness; no bliss so absorbing, no pangs of jealousy or despair so crushing and so keen. What tenderness and what devotion, what illimitable confidence, infinite revelations of inmost thoughts, what ecstatic present and romantic future, what bitter estrangements and what melting reconciliations, what scenes of wild recrimination, agitating explanations, passionate correspondence, what insane sensitiveness, and what frantic sensibility; what earthquakes

of the heart and whirlwinds of the soul, are confined in the simple phrase, a school-boy's friendship! 'Tis some indefinite recollection of these mystic passages of their young emotion that makes grey-haired men mourn over the memory of their school-boy days. It is a spell that can soften the acerbity of political warfare, and with its witchery can call forth a sigh even amid the callous bustle of fashionable saloons."<sup>1</sup>

Such a friendship, if it rests on no solid foundation, naturally soon passes away, and, as years increase, the faculties of the mind become strengthened, and the eye can no longer overcome the judgment of the intellect. On the other hand, the

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<sup>1</sup> "Coningsby," vol. i. p. 96, third edition, and see the speech of Helena in "Midsummer Night's Dream," act iii. sc. 2.