

from Mr. Ball's Soc. to Miss Manning - 5/-

"Mr. T. Manning could not be designated a great Philologist. He was perhaps a better Philologist than a linguist. He was of course a good classical scholar, there can be no doubt upon that subject - though I am not competent to speak as to his proficiency. He was a good French scholar, that I know, but of Spanish, you must be well aware from your own knowledge, that his acquaintance with that language, was very limited. Of Portuguese he knew still less. It had been learned during his tour in Italy with me. It was pretty well read in Dante, and could read the more familiar parts with tolerable ease. Of German he knew nothing. So that it cannot be said that he was deeply versed in modern languages. Of Asiatic languages he had no knowledge, beyond that of Chinese. In this language he was strong. I can speak with some certainty on this point, having read Chinese with him. He had not the same ready command and practical use of the symbols or characters which enables a person to write without the assistance of a Chinese that Dr. Morrison had; but in the knowledge of the force and import of words, the grammatical construction and genius of the language, he far excelled, in my opinion, all other students of the day. That so much valuable knowledge should have died with him, and so much labour have been ~~wasted~~ spent in vain, is ever to be regretted. He might have smoothed a long path for others very considerably, but his unhappy fastidiousness, his contempt of any

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Extract from
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Any short of excellence, & his indifference to worldly fame, betrayed him into habits of procrastination, which led him to defer too long the committing of his thoughts to paper. It relied too much on his memory, and unluckily miscalculated the length of days. Thus you perceive that your dear brother's knowledge of language was confined to an intimate acquaintance with the classical languages, French and Italian — to which may be added Chinese, in which language, as compared with other students, there can be no doubt, he was a profound scholar. But after all, it may be doubted whether language was his forte. Yet he had studied the philosophy of language from a boy, & had, as it appeared to me, great philosophical acumen. Mathematics I shan't have thought was the science in which he excelled. But what always surprised me was, the universality of his talents and acquirements, and depth of knowledge in all that he had studied. That now may be called Social Philosophy engaged much of his thoughts. And his object in visiting China was to study the language, law, and social state of that vast empire. He was a good political economist of the Adam Smith school, though he did not much respect that science, because the moral state or condition of man forms no part of it. But his learning was not confined to

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abstract studies. He had a very accurate taste in the fine arts, was a good judge of Painting and Sculpture, and had read much on these subjects. He understood the theory of music perfectly, played simple airs on the flute very pleasantly, and could sing from notes at sight without music, & in parts. He was no bad Poet, as you may see by that Ballad which he composed on the rising of the Spanish people in defence of Ferdinand the 7th. It was an impromptu, and written with several other in different tunes in a few hours, at the request of a friend; had to me as soon as written, & sung at a dinner given by the English to the Spaniards at Macao to celebrate that glorious & joyful event. It was playful and witty, & you see by Charles Lamb's letter to Manning, which form the most lively and attractive part of the collection, what power he had of exciting wit in others. It is a pity his letters to Lamb were destroyed - but that was due, I believe, at his own request. I knew from Charles Lamb himself that he had the greatest veneration for your brother, & thought him a most remarkable man. And I can say with great truth, what Fox said of Burke, that I have heard more from him in conversation than from books. —

Wolverley.
Kidderminster.

Mr. S. Ball
27. 12. July. 1850.

Papers relating to
Manning