
PORTFOLIO CHINENSIS :

OR

A COLLECTION

OF

CHINESE STATE PAPERS.

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AUTHENTIC

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ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE HISTORY OF THE PRESENT POSITION OF AFFAIRS
IN CHINA.

WITH

A TRANSLATION, NOTES AND INTRODUCTION.

BY

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PREFACE.

Chinese

THOSE important ~~Russian~~ State Papers made public by Mr. Urquhart, and printed by Ridgway and Sons, London, were published in monthly numbers under the title of "Portfolio": hence the origin of the application of the term in the present instance. The designs of the Chinese Government are usually made known beforehand by public Proclamations, written (and sometimes printed) in very large and legible characters, and pasted up at all the most frequented thoroughfares, stamped with the red seals of the high officers who issue them.

The following Translations are some of the results of portions of legitimate missionary study. The Papers were regarded as worthy of being preserved, not only as illustrative, in some degree, of the language and literature of a confessedly vast portion of the human family, but as being the productions of some of the highest statesmen of the Empire, and upon a subject too, at present, so thrillingly interesting to the whole internal and foreign policy of the nation. Thinking that there would possibly be others also who might be desirous of possessing, in a collected form, both the original and a translation, we have been induced, without any higher pretensions, to afford them the opportunity of so doing. The volume could have been swelled to any reasonable size, but the present limits comprise all the objects originally intended. Upon the character of the Papers we make no comment, leaving them to speak for themselves, and to make their own impressions upon the minds of all those who choose to wade through them.

The Translations here given are professedly independent, although translations of the last five were published in the local Periodicals at the time of their first appearance. The assistance of others, whenever inclination prompted, has been unhesitatingly availed of. The Translations throughout profess to be mainly literal, and therefore may perhaps afford some aid to the partially advanced Student of Chinese, who will find it to his advantage to pay some attention to this class of Chinese composition. The volume may in one sense be regarded as an elementary book for beginners. The Notes were designed only for those who were not previously acquainted with the points which they (the Notes) attempt to explain. The small figures in the page refer to the Notes at the end. The Introduction, (in the prep-

aration of which, authentic sources were consulted) will not be considered inappropriate to the subjects of which the Documents treat. Logical arrangement and concatenation of thought are rarely found in Chinese compositions.

But little difficulty was found in working in the English metal types with the Chinese wooden blocks; indeed the principle is the same precisely as that adopted with the wood-cuts employed in embellishing books printed in the English and other languages, and technically called Xylography. The paper is Chinese, and the best quality to be procured. The English types are entirely new, and this the first time they have been used. Pains have been taken to secure accuracy and neatness in execution, still great allowances must be made for the vast inconveniences at present unavoidably attending the publication of books in these ends of the earth. In portions of some of the copies, some typographical errors exist, but no list is made of them, in the hope, as they are unimportant, that they may not be noticed. All the Chinese sounds given are in the Mandarin or Court dialect, and according to Dr. Morrison's orthography. The Chinese perpendicular method of reading is adhered to, although, to accommodate it to the Translation the original is made to read from the left instead of the right side of the page, which latter is the usual manner of all native books. The pointing in the text was done by a good native Teacher, but other Teachers equally good, would possibly have placed the points somewhat differently, yet not so as materially to affect the sense. A variety of literary opinion is found to exist on the same subjects among the reading portion of the Chinese. Some of the points, as well as some of the characters, have been carelessly altered by the block-cutter. The Appendix contains a very recent, and certainly a very uncommon document.

The work is put forth with much diffidence, and with no sanguine expectations of public patronage.—All indulgences exercised toward acknowledged imperfections will not be lightly esteemed: nor is any defiance offered to the critic's pen.