



TAITSONG the GREAT

U A 46

H I S T O R Y

OF

C H I N A .

BY

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ETC. ETC.

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TO
SIR RUTHERFORD ALCOCK, K.C.B.,
ETC. ETC.,
WHOSE KNOWLEDGE OF THE COUNTRY, AND
SYMPATHY WITH THE PEOPLE
CONSTITUTE HIM AN AUTHORITY UPON THE SUBJECT OF CHINA
THIS HISTORY IS DEDICATED BY THE
AUTHOR.

P R E F A C E .



IT is unnecessary for me to detain the reader with any lengthy remarks by way of introduction to this history. The Chinese Empire presents for our consideration one of the most complicated of existing problems; and the subject is of growing rather than waning importance. In dealing with its history we are not discussing the fortunes of some Empire that has long disappeared, nor are we seeking to discern the future of a race that has lost or forgotten the capacity of government; but we are treating of a state and a people that apparently were never, during the long course of their national existence, more powerful and flourishing than they are at this very day.

Gibbon has truly said, in his immortal work, that "China has been illustrated by the labours of the French," and that statement is almost as true now