

As already stated the first English ambassador to have audience of a Chinese Emperor was Lord Macartney, in 1793. Lord Macartney offered to *kotow* to the Emperor if a Chinese nobleman did as much before a picture of George III, which he had brought for the purpose. The offer was refused. Lord Macartney knelt on one knee when presenting his credentials in the interview that was eventually granted, but the Chinese always declared afterward that he had *kotowed*. They further illustrated their Emperor's claims by exhibiting before His Lordship, who was innocent of any knowledge of Chinese, a flag with the inscription:—"Ambassador bearing tribute from the country of England."

Receiving the Envoys.

When the war between England and China came to an end, in 1860, article 3 of the treaty concluded by the conquerors stipulating that Britain's representative "shall not be called upon to perform any ceremony derogatory to him as representing the sovereignty of an independent nation on a footing of equality with China." For some years—during the exile of Hsien-Feng and the minority of Tung-Chih—it was not possible to act upon the right of audience implied in this clause of the treaty.

As soon, however, as Tung-Chih assumed the reins of government, in 1873, the foreign Ministers at Peking collectively requested permission to present their congratulations to him in person. The request could not be denied, but, just as the Chinese had in Lord Macartney's case saved their armor proper by means of a flag, so now they achieved the same result by receiving the envoys in the Tsu-Kuang-Ko, a building on the outskirts of the palace enclosure, which, being inferior to the palace proper, carried with it, to the

Chinese mind, the tributary idea, and was therefore the less objectionable.

Tung-Chih died in 1875, and was succeeded by the present Emperor, then a minor. The audience question accordingly slumbered again for a time, but when the new ruler assumed the control of the government it came to the front once more. Kuangsu, however, did not wait for any representations to be made to him on the subject, but on December 12, 1890, he issued the following proclamation, the first intimation that the outside world received of the progressive spirit actuating the present Emperor:

"I have now been in charge of the government for two years. The Ministers of foreign Powers ought to be received by me at audience; and I hereby decree that the audience to be held be in accordance with that of the twelfth year of Tung-Chih (1873). It is also hereby decreed that a day be fixed every year for an audience in order to show my desire to treat with honor all the Ministers of the foreign Powers resident in Peking."

The Dragon Pillar.

This voluntary action on the Emperor's part marked a distinct step in advance, but it will be seen that he adhered to the precedent set by Tung-Chih of holding the reception in the Tzu-Kuang-Ko. A good deal of dissatisfaction was expressed on this point, but the audience, nevertheless, took place on March 5, 1891. The Emperor sat on a dais behind a table covered with yellow silk. Each of the six Ministers received, bowed at stated intervals, as he walked up the hall, and then pausing at what was called the Dragon Pillar, read his letter of credence, which was translated by the interpreter and finally handed to the President of the Tsungli Yamen, or Foreign Council, by