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MORSE AT ENOSHIMA AND TOKYO

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## ABSTRACT

In which our hero sets up a marine laboratory at Enoshima in the summer of 1877 and then, in the fall, takes up his position as first professor of Zoology at the Imperial University in Tokyo. And how he excavates the kitchen middens at Omori and introduces archeology to Japan; and how he brings his family to live there for two years; and how he begins to collect pottery; and how he learns how to waste (enjoy?) time; and how he leaves in 1879 with many interests and ideas that were not his just three years before.

## CHAPTER III - Section 2

### MORSE AT ENOSHIMA AND TOKYO

Little drama on this journey. A touch of the exotic, to be sure, but nothing to fill the screen with hints of action to come, to set the mind dreaming of romance and danger. More of a quiet trip, one that begins in the late afternoon. Instead of horses hooves, rolling wheels; instead of armed samurai, rickshaw men; instead of spring snow flurries, the leaf-wilting heat of mid-July. Plenty of holy and historic ground along the eighteen-mile road from Yokohama, but all that remains off camera. Down the tree-lined Tokaido fly the feet of Edward S. Morse's runners. No time to take the recommended tourist route, to view the pine tree at Nokendo, where the famed artist Kanaoka threw down a brush in despair at ever being able to capture the beauty of the landscape; the beach at Inamura Saki, where great battles were fought in the middle ages; the stream named Yukiiai, where Buddhist patriarch Nichiren was saved from beheading in the thirteenth century. No time for a short detour to the once-sprawling capital of Kamakura; to visit the Hachiman shrine and see Shogun Yoritomo's swords in their silver and gold scabbards; to ring the great bell at Engakuji; to walk down the startling avenue of evergreens towards the monumental bronze Daibutsu.

Rice fields yellow in a low sun, wild pinks along the roadside, the nutmeg scent of lilies, a long sandy hill, and suddenly the sea. Directly ahead, the green slate lump of Enoshima, corded to the

mainland by a narrow bar of sand. North and south, beaches fringed with white breakers. Good it is to stretch the legs after the three-hour ride, to walk the sand and pick up semi-tropical shells, known since boyhood only in museum collections; good to savor their names in Latin: Cyprae, Conus, Dolium. The village heaps upward in a street so narrow that sun rarely touches its damp surface, so steep that every so often the incline becomes a small flight of stairs. Three-story wooden teahouses crowd together; long bright banners hang from poles; shops burst with souvenirs made from shells, sea urchin, ceramics, wood; the shrill, insistent voices of innkeepers, their wives and servants, urge the traveler to rest, buy, drink, eat, sleep. Pilgrims in travel-stained robes push towards shrines on the wooded crest of the isle. From second story windows, flashes of silk, loud, off-key voices, the flat pluck of the samisen, giggles and bursts of hearty laughter.

Supper at a teahouse. Morse and Professor Yatabe, a graduate of Cornell, sit on the floor and clap hands to summon servants. The American is famished. Breakfast was ever so long ago and lunch skipped as part of a plan to become hungry enough to subsist on a native diet. Young girls enter, kneel to serve food, and when they bow out, the low table looks as if the contents of an aquarium have been spilled onto it. Porcelain, lacquer and stoneware dishes are covered with seafood and fish--fried, broiled, in soup and raw. Tentacles wave and dead eyes stare with coldness of the sea. An initial expression of dismay slowly gives way to firm resolve. Morse does his best, struggles to sit up straight, fidgets with his legs to keep them from cramping,

fumbles with the chopsticks, tastes everything, drops bits of food onto the clean mats, and finally pronounces the sashimi "fairly good," the fried fish "delicious" and his first Japanese meal, on the whole, to be "very agreeable." But not so good that a nice slice of bread and butter would not have been more than welcome.

That evening, the next day, the two men purposefully push through streets asurge with the rhythm of pilgrims who little distinguish between religious devotion and pleasure. Amidst the crowds, Morse's face alone is touched with the factual; he alone seems pressed, anxious, in a hurry. Only six weeks until school starts and so much to do before then--set up a laboratory, start collecting specimens for the natural history museum in Tokyo, get his own research underway. Finding a small waterfront building is not difficult, and the rent of thirty sen--to be paid by the university--reasonable enough. But how to get these people moving quickly, how to hurry Orientals who, as everyone knows, "give no value to time." Exhortation, demands, emphatic words to the owner through an interpreter. No, next week is not soon enough to begin refitting the building. It must be done now, or not at all. Then the attempt to "hammer into the thick head of a country carpenter the idea of a long table against the wall, for they have no tables; to get four stools made, for they have no such thing . . . to get each sliding window and door locked, for they have no locks on their houses."

Put aside all worries--the Japanese are eager, helpful, "willing to do anything." He can jaunt off to Tokyo for a few days and return

to find the first zoological laboratory in the nation nearly complete, shelves and tables piled with jars, kegs, sieves, ropes, dredges, cans of alcohol. The final touch is to secure the door with a padlock and hasp, purchased in Yokohama, screwed into place by Morse under the eyes of a curious crowd of "men, women and girls, and naked children with dirty faces." On July 30 all is ready. Time now for the long-awaited moment; time to justify coming so far, spending so much. Anticipation, fear, hope, doubt, yearning--all these are carried into the intense morning sun on a small, keelless boat. Two hired men lean into the sculls. Morse sits upright, blind to the beauties of island, shoreline, mountains. As the craft rolls into the high swells of open water, two lab assistants double over with seasickness. Down goes the dredge into fifteen fathoms and up comes little but mud and worthless debris until, close to shore in the afternoon, twenty tiny brachiopods spill from the dredge and gleam in the sun like precious jewels. "Astonishment and delight," yes that, and something else he forgets to mention--a kind of silent scream of joy to see these sweet familiar forms, so like those in North Carolina. Well-earned, too. By the end of the day, two hundred specimens are safe in the lab, awaiting the skilled eye of the natural scientist.

The next four weeks vanish in a fury of activity. Morse and his aides dredge in open waters and coves, scour reefs and pools at low tide, dig into the muddy bottom of the tiny river that empties into the sea near the sand bar. He becomes a Midas of marine life--each site yields treasures, countless species both familiar and new, until every

flat surface in the small laboratory overflows with mollusks, urchins, starfish, crabs, worms, snails, shrimp, abalone, clams. Three assistants struggle to handle the load; they sort, dry, prepare, bottle and label specimens for the Tokyo collection, leaving Morse free to concentrate on his specialty. So much time does he spend at the microscope that his back begins to ache and a masseur must be summoned. No matter. Pain is a small price to pay for the discovery of "a number of new organs never before seen in Brachiopods," for proving this species is not exactly the same as that in North America. By mid-August his triumph is secure. The impulse to come here was a good one. He has learned more than enough to justify the journey to Japan.

Now the difficulties begin. Not for Morse, but for his biographer. The problem is sources--the journal he kept in Japan, the letters written home. Neither reveal what you really want to know; neither give enough detail, or the right kind of detail, to fill out the full story that lies behind the words, the story that the biographer wishes to tell, the story of how and why Japan caused this American scientist to switch from a lifelong interest in the natural world to a passionate interest in the artifacts and customs of the human world. Easy enough it is to speculate. Just point to his age: thirty-nine. Time for a mid-life crisis, a reassessment of one's values brought on by the lengthening shadows of mortality. Toss in the professional: natural history is dividing into narrower disciplines,

moving towards the experimental, and the gap between popular and research science is growing too wide to straddle. Add the economic: Japan is a hot topic for lectures and articles. Surely in these factors you have explanation enough.

Maybe yes; most likely no. Evidence for each explanation is available, but the material by Morse eludes easy categorization. The contents of the journal and letters are much the same--details, incidents, disconnected events, customs, habits, artifacts, all described with a kind of clinical dispassion. Judgments and emotional reactions are not missing, but so toned down, so distanced that they can seem those of a person other than the writer. Here is the most serious problem: what makes Morse a superb observer is what makes him a poor subject for biography. Something in the last fifteen years has changed the young man whose diary brimmed with ambition, self-doubt, rage at his father, love for his mother, desire for Nellie, worship and then contempt for Agassiz. He has made peace with the world, which in this case is another way of saying he has disappeared into his profession. Success has a way of doing that, of making you stop asking questions of yourself. But it can also free you to try something new.

How, then, to handle this problem of story, to give movement, even the shape of drama to his time in Japan. For Morse it is always one thing after another, with no highlights, climaxes, momentous turning points. Things go down in the journal as he sees and hears them; forty years later they are published the same way. Order, development, change, any motion towards understanding must be imposed by a later

mind. No plan, no conscious categories structure what he sees, sketches, records in words. His propensity is for the simple, the common, the humble gesture or artifact that tends to escape most foreign eyes and can remain hidden from natives by patterns of familiarity and routine. Like anyone, then or now, he details what of them matters most to him, not them. Observation is, not surprisingly, what he likes and does best. Action is usually only a way of getting somewhere to observe something. Now try and make a story out of that.

Okay. But don't expect too much. Not from the period in Enoshima. Work is the central experience there; for Morse that does not make it different from anywhere else. Pressure is his--so much to do in such a short time. But life cannot all be work. You cannot dredge or use a microscope at night with much success; you must let assistants enjoy alcohol, games, entertainments, local holidays. Outside the window of the lab lies a world that can tempt the eye away from the research table. In the streets and tea houses, at the inn where he stays, the behavior of the people, their customs and artifacts--all the simple things that define the rounds of life--seem fresh, novel, interesting. Not perhaps as important as Brachiopods; not as significant as naming a new species or producing a first-class scientific paper; but often worthy of a note in the journal, a quick sketch, a memory filed away for some future time when the world grows narrower and its colors begin to fade. Yet more than nostalgia is involved here. The "infernal journal" is also a kind of work, one that takes precedence over letters home, and absorbs so much time that

future payoffs become part of its justification. Articles, lectures, books--surely useful things will spring from all this effort.

That's for later. First get down the routine, the simple events, the daily encounters, opportunities, and difficulties. Like the problem of sleeping. Often Morse's nights are restless, and not just because of the summer heat and thick humidity. On the first evening swarms of mosquitos drive him from the hammock--Dr. Murray's bright idea--to a futon on the matted floor beneath the kind of netting that natives use. Comfortable enough, except that the wooden headrest gives him a stiff neck, so three waistcoats and a pair of trousers rolled inside a shirt begin to serve as a pillow. This leaves two problems unsolved--voracious fleas and persistent noise. Insect powder helps with one, but for the other there is no cure. After dark, these normally polite people have not the slightest touch of consideration for others. Through the thin walls of the inn, the slightest sound easily penetrates, yet drinking, music, singing and loud conversations, punctuated by the slamming of shoji and fusuma, are part of the nightly ritual. Even after the parties are finished, eager messengers are liable to shake him awake at any hour between midnight and dawn to deliver a letter, a newspaper, or a dredge and rope ordered from Tokyo.

Daylight makes it all worthwhile. The morning view from his room is "indescribable," or best rendered in a few spare words: "beautiful cove . . . spacious bay, magnificent Fuji." Each day he watches fishing boats, whose graceful lines of hull and sail repeatedly evade the skill of his pen, as he takes breakfast on some odd pieces of

"Western" furniture--a table so tall and a chair so low that his head comes "conveniently level" with his plate. Thoughts of living on native food have long since vanished. A single morning meal--fish soup, rice, pickles--that looks suspiciously like leftovers from dinner the night before, and provisions and a personal cook are hastily summoned from Yokohama. Repeated sharp lectures to this man eventually result in a morning meal fit for a hardworking American--eggs on toast, ham, cheese, broiled fish, and--most important--coffee. No doubt it would save a lot of money and trouble if the "strange" local food would fully satisfy him. Certainly living on it remains a good idea. But not now. Maybe later.

The inn where he stays, the best in town, just below the temples, shrines and groves of trees on the crest of the island, never elicits either a full description or a sketch. Over-familiarity, perhaps, or the fact that this is a work place. However lovely the room, any delicate appointments are hidden by a jumble of his own belongings. The eating table is a clutter of dishes, cutlery, glasses, tins of food; his round work table holds a kerosene lamp, books, sheets of paper, pens, ink bottles, tins of flea powder, jars to hold interesting insects that happen by at night. Specially rigged corner shelves overflow with small items--pipes, tobacco pouches, boxes of matches, cans of alcohol, shells, glass sponges. The floor is not exempt from confusion. Visitors must pick their way carefully over dredges, binoculars, straw hats, Japanese pillows, piles of mosquito netting, and a huge open valise, bursting with clothing. Such disorder may not

be to everyone's taste, but Morse has neither time nor patience to keep things straight: "There is too much to do in this world to fuss about trifles."

Just as well to leave things in a mess--its another way of providing entertainment for the natives. Already they find Morse's belongings and behavior a source of endless fascination. From other second story windows at the inn, the eyes of guests follow his movements. Serving women wander into his room in this land where privacy is neither word nor concept; they gape to see him write in a journal from left to right with a metal-tipped pen rather than vertically with a soft brush; they handle unfamiliar items--his microscope, pith helmet, and meerschaum pipe, so elephantine compared to their tiny, metal-bowl models; they giggle and ask questions he cannot understand. It is the same when he leaves the inn to stroll down the narrow, crowded street towards the lab. Heads turn his way, but the stares are never impertinent, the voices of innkeepers, children or pilgrims never raised in anger or derision. People approach to touch his clothing or hat, an itinerant barber may call to him or a professional story-teller send a remark his way, but always with an air of deference. Such a sharp contrast to what he imagines would be the experience of a Japanese in kimono walking the streets of an American city--rude shouts, loud laughter, clods of dirt hurled by ragamuffins.

Comparisons like this are impossible to avoid. Daily, even hourly street encounters turn the diary into a continuing evaluation of two

"civilizations." The simplest of experiences can provoke a comment. Never does he cease to marvel at the politeness and good manners here that highlight the crude behavior of Americans at home. This is not just a matter of how a foreigner is treated. The routine greetings of the humblest townspeople can cause him to stop and stare with "vulgar curiosity." There they are, two friends, meeting in the street, standing side-by-side, bowing a formal hello, then bowing again and again, each bow lower than the previous one until they seem about to topple over. A few words are exchanged, then bows of departure begin and continue as the two back away along the street, oblivious to everything around them. To an "active American" all this is a terrible--if charming--waste of time. So it is good to be told that modern university students are giving up such elaborate manners. Yet this leaves a real question hanging between the lines: is not something of value also being lost?

Not far from the foot of the street is the lab, a square wooden building on a stone seawall, with windows that look along the shore of a small cove and over the sandbar to the mainland. Step inside the door and you find three men at worktables amidst a jumble of buckets, kegs, bottles, and wooden frames for drying starfish and urchins. Both assistants--Matsumara, paid by the university, and Professor Toyama, here at his own expense--are diligent and dedicated. So is the local man, hired originally to lug things and sleep in the building at night. Unnamed in the diary, uneducated and untrained, he shows such an unexpected ability to locate the tiniest of mollusks and the most

microscopic sand shells that he can come to represent the "general intelligence of everybody in Japan." If the criteria is to be familiarity with sea creatures, then the locals will indeed score high--almost every living thing in the water is used as a source of food. But this kind of knowledge cannot account for the helpfulness of the natives, their willingness to deliver huge buckets of specimens for the tiniest of payments--a few cents for a heap of rare mollusks. Nor can it explain those people who help for the joy of the activity, or the rickshaw men who, on trips into the countryside, throw themselves into impromptu searches for land shells. Just try to imagine "a hackman at home volunteering his services on such a quest."

Afternoons can be difficult. August sun is the problem--if you are outdoors, it gives a bad burn right through clothing; if you are in the lab, the eyes grow heavy with drowsiness. Yes, Morse is capable of sneaking away to take a nap in the room or going off to sketch the nearby huts of fishermen. So much do their boats, nets and techniques impress him that ever after he will refer to Enoshima as a "fishing village" and ignore its main enterprise--religion. For eight hundred years the local shrine to Benten--tamer of dragons and motherly goddess of the sea--has drawn pilgrims from all over the empire. Morse never records her name, never bothers to inquire into the history and legends that have made the island a place of worship, never seems to realize she is a Shinto rather than a Buddhist deity. Twice he sails around to Benten's sacred cave, but viewing its shrine and the dragon carvings on the wall interest him far less than collecting "twilight" spiders, sow

bugs and crickets. Only once does he make time for the hilltop shrines, where ancient relics--armor, bronze mirrors, a rare wooden statue of the goddess nude--are passed over without a word. But when a priest exhibits the lower jaw of a whale as a piece of wood turned to stone, and the mandibles of a large beetle as the horns of a snake, he is reminded of similar nonsense at home. In this some "Buddhists" are like religious people anywhere--they prefer tradition to evidence, fancy to fact.

Not that this is true of all Japanese. Or even most of them. Morse tends to assume that the natives--certainly the educated ones--are ready to accept the procedures, judgments and world view of Western science. During evenings in this room this attitude is at first reinforced, then shaken. Toyama and Matsumara drop in to enjoy the bright luxury of kerosene lighting and often bring a friend named Ikkoto, who translates serious books from English even though he speaks not a word of the language. Difficult it is for the American not to hold forth on science; more difficult not to be impressed by the serious attentiveness of his listeners. Yet something familiar is missing, something he cannot at first name, something that only comes to consciousness when, so regularly in reply to his perpetual questions about the "whys and wherefores" of customs, habits and artifacts, his Japanese companions look surprised or smile with the embarrassment of people who have never thought about something so familiar and obvious. Three weeks into the stay, Morse is faced with a powerful oddity: curious as they can seem, never has one of his assistants "asked a

question as to how we did such and such things at home, or about the various objects on my table, in which, nevertheless, they take an interest."

To think about this is to sense a pattern. Willingness to learn, lack of bias against new modes of thought, new techniques--so far as he can tell, these seem to be national traits, but ones which go along with a kind of passivity, an acceptance of authority that makes Morse slightly uneasy even if he is the authority. Not that he worries this point. It is merely noted in passing, then unconsciously illustrated with glimpses of other evenings. These are hardly limited to the serious. One great source of fun is to invite a local family--who arrive in a huge mass of children, servants, neighbors and friends--to look through a microscope. Such hilarity, such expressions of astonishment, such low bows, and repeated "arigatos" follow the sight of flies' heads and spider's legs magnified to an amazing size. Frequent companions are four "laughing and pleasant" pre-medical students who pass the time in a nearby room by practicing German and English in loud voices. They teach him difficult board games like Go and a native form of chess "too complex to understand" in a single evening, along with simple, lightning-fast hand contests like scissors, paper, stone. Different from their counterparts in America, these bright youngsters seem strangely uninterested in the practical or public aspects of their future profession; not one would consider it of "interest or importance to learn the death-rate of a town or of what diseases people died."

No reason to make too much of this, one of many hasty observations recorded during Enoshima weeks that pass "like a flash." Little wonder. The round of days is hardly regular. Interruptions include two typhoons that bury the sandbar and make it necessary to evacuate the lab, three trips to Tokyo on university business, two visits from Westerners anxious to see the progress of Morse's endeavors. If his generalizations need not be weighted with too heavy a burden of meaning, this first exposure to Japan unmediated by other foreigners gives rise to judgments that will not much alter in coming years. Different these people are from Westerners, different too from whatever Morse had imagined. Not that he is one to claim difference means worse-- or better. Each instance must be decided on its own. And yet there is a pattern, one that he can see long before the end of his island stay. Like all foreigners, his initial impressions were that the Japanese do things "just the reverse from us;" like the others, his reaction was that "our way is undeniably right." Now he is less certain, willing to entertain the notion that since they "are a much older civilized race, it may be possible that their way of doing some things is really the best way."

An odd comment for a Westerner. A sign of all the changes undergone since landing in Yokohama. Things taken for granted at home are now part of consciousness; his mind has been opened to other possibilities. No, he does not say this, at least not directly. Perhaps he does not even know it yet, though all the hints and bits of evidence are there in his own words. For the first time in years, he

puzzles--if only momentarily--over human beings, their goals, behavior, habits, beliefs. Unused to grappling with such notions, unaware of any conceptual frameworks for such ideas, he is reduced to a kind of observational common sense. To live among people who seem so open, simple, curious, and friendly is to find them not quite adults, to see them as "a set of overgrown, good-natured, kind-hearted, laughing children." At the same time, another image, equally strong, refuses to blend with this--in self-composure, reticence and stoicism, the Japanese resemble North American Indians; this is to say that in certain kinds of self-control, they are very much adults indeed.

Morse is too much the observer to reconcile such contradictions, too far removed from social analysis to desire a theory that will bridge all gaps in evidence. Ultimately the meaning of Enoshima is personal. Only after returning to Tokyo is there time to reflect on experiences there, time to draw up a rough balance sheet on these important weeks that passed too quickly. In his rambling reminiscence, you can feel a kind of wonder that things on the island really were as they were, a growing dissatisfaction that things at home are as they are, and an indirect self-criticism that even he, a scientist who has discarded a religious upbringing, should have until now accepted the Christian notion that "paganism" means "uncivilized." Here too is a good indication of how a growing affection is beginning to make Japan and its people seem as important to Morse as the shells he came to find: "I have spent six weeks in that little crowded collection of houses, with people overworked and at it from four o'clock in the

morning till midnight, with an overwhelming amount of work to do in providing for the crowds of pilgrims thronging in upon them. . . . The visitors seem to demand four or five meals a day, and are constantly calling for tea, coals for their pipe, hot sake, etc. Children of all ages were swarming everywhere; yet, living among them in the closest proximity, I did not hear during my whole stay there a single cross word; babies cried, but mothers laughed at them, and when they were in actual distress sympathetically stroked their ventral region. A pleasant smile always greeted me from all, and though I chased their barking dogs through the single street and occasionally threw stones at them, they looked amiably upon my behavior as the eccentricities of a foreign barbarian and laughed! Now this is paganism--to be kind and obliging, courteous and hospitable, generous with their food and their time, sharing their last bowl of rice with you; and whatever you may be doing--collecting, pulling up a boat, or anything else--jinriksha men, or fishermen, always ready to lend, or rather to give in abundance, a helping hand."

Tokyo in the summer of 1877--as it has been for at least a century, the largest city in the world both in area and population. Nobody then or now knows the exact number of inhabitants, but eight hundred thousand is a good estimate. Twenty-five years earlier it was close to a million and a quarter, then the great earthquake of 1855 destroyed half the city, and subsequent fires and a cholera epidemic

further wasted the population. More significant for the inhabitants is the year 1856--that's when the foreign barbarians come to Japan to stay. In September the first representative of a foreign government, Townsend Harris, takes up residence as American Consul in the port town of Shimoda, isolated from the main highways and population centers of the empire by the wild terrain of the Izu Peninsula. After fifteen months of tedious negotiations and scarcely-veiled threats of action by the U. S. Navy, Harris arrives in Edo--as Tokyo is then known--to present a letter from President Franklin Pierce to the nation's military ruler, thirteenth in the Tokugawa line that dates back to 1600. No foreigner has ever before stood on his feet in the presence of the Shogun. For the dynasty, this is a fateful symbol. For the historian, the date presents one of those ironies of history that he cannot refrain from underlining--December 7, 1857.

Barbarians are ultimately more devastating than any earthquake. Political conflict, social strife, economic upheaval, the rising of long-dissatisfied clans in the south and west--and by 1868 the Tokugawa line is at an end. The last Shogun retires to Shizuoka, a hundred miles from the capital, and the seventeen year old Mutsuhito, renamed Meiji--"Enlightened Learning"--to symbolize the new era, becomes the first emperor in eleven hundred years to move from Kyoto. When he takes up residence in the Shogun's former palace, Edo becomes Tokyo, or Eastern Capital. Not that this is done directly. The Imperial edict is a masterpiece of circumlocution: "Edo is the great bastion of the east country. Upon it converge the crowds, and from it one can

personally oversee affairs of state. Accordingly the place known as Edo will henceforth be known as Tokyo." Among the Japanese, arguments will rage for a long time over whether this constitutes a legal change of capitals; among foreign diplomats and residents, the city will be called Edo for many years to come.

To most Westerners, Tokyo does not much look like a real capital. "A collection of villages," that's the usual description of this city nine miles long, eight miles wide, interlaced by rivers and countless canals. Seen from a high point, it appears as a vast sprawl of trees, gardens and dark roofs, with large open areas of vacant space. Missing are the great public buildings, the squares, the monuments and bronze statues, the steeples, domes and bell towers, the stone palaces associated with European capitals. Even the palace is only a one-story wooden structure which, however elegant, can hardly overawe either the populace or foreign visitors. Few ever get close enough to see it anyway, for it is hidden away behind the one feature of Tokyo that seems to bespeak the word "empire," a series of huge stone walls and wide moats. Yet even these are diminishing. After the restoration of 1868, some of the outer walls are levelled, the moats filled, the great wooden gates dismantled as part of an effort to make the emperor seem less remote and forbidding than in the past. Destruction, yes, but in the name of progress towards something called political representation.

Changes like this do not much alter the shape of the city. From the expansive palace grounds at the center all the way to the bay on the east and beyond the Sumida River on the north lies the so-called

Low City, home to more than half a million common people--laborers, artisans, entertainers, small merchants--who reside in tiny houses jammed together in narrow alleys and streets. Gone are the high wooden barriers that once divided this area into thirty wards, but some of the old divisions remain. Areas or blocks can still be given over to members of a single craft--carpenters, metal workers, coopers, printers, paper makers, basket weavers, silk merchants. Here too are the licensed quarters, the centers for geisha and prostitution. Best known, most elaborate and expensive is the Yoshiwara, set off behind high walls and canals, but in Tokyo pleasure spills across official boundaries. Commoners and country pilgrims flock to the most popular temple in the land, that of Kwannon, Goddess of Mercy, at Asakusa. More than religion attracts them, for this is also a region of music halls, vaudeville shows, wax museums, Kabuki theaters, and archery galleries where, on the second floor, you can buy a cup of tea or rent a young woman.

The streets and buildings of this Low City are monotonous--a splendid temple here and there set in miles of low, unpainted, weathered, gray structures with few distinctive characteristics. Little here to catch the eyes of visitors, save for the thatched or tiled roofs, the openness of houses to the street, the fact that most are used as both workplace and home. By 1877 a few foreign style buildings have gone up, but only two areas can at all be called Westernized. Tsukiji, still the only legal place of residence for foreigners who do not work for the government and live in an official

compound somewhere else in the city, boasts two churches, a hotel, and enough western-style residences to house a population of some two hundred merchants, missionaries, teachers, and opium dealers. And then there is an obscure area named Ginza, rebuilt after a serious fire in 1872 entirely with shops of brick, its main thoroughfares illuminated with the first gas lighting in the city.

West and south of the palace lie the wooded, rolling hills of the High City. Here once lived the great daimyo and their retainers, required by the Shogun to spend alternate years in the capital and to leave wives and children behind as hostages when they returned to their home provinces. Now their sprawling yashiki--small palaces surrounded by barracks that once housed thousands of samurai, and enclosed by long, blank white walls--are falling into ruin. Some have burned to the ground; others have been demolished to sell off the land for the homes of newly-rich merchants; a few have been donated for national purposes, to help make a reality of the government slogan for the new age of Meiji, "Civilization and Enlightenment." That of the Maeda family, rulers of the former Kaga domain, has been given as the site for the highest school in the land--Kaisei Gakko, renamed Tokyo Daigaku (Tokyo University) in April, 1877. On this huge wild and overgrown estate, the long-time residence of foxes and flocks of crows, now dwell foreign professors who teach at the university.

On August 29, Morse arrives at the Kaga Yashiki in a ricksha, sore from two bumpy days on the road, weary with the effort of holding a basket full of delicate marine specimens in his lap. Palm trees, a banana plant, bamboo grass and blooming rose bushes front Number Five, his official residence, a large house built "in foreign style." The chimney, broad veranda, sash windows, and swinging front door may speak of home, but a massive tile roof, delicate carvings over the doorway, and matted floors all proclaim its hybrid nature. That night, those first few nights are lonely. Rats scurry along thin ceiling boards and changes of temperature make wooden walls and floors creak until he is "prepared to take an oath" that stealthy footsteps are sounding along the porch. No real cause for alarm. His spiritualist days are long in the past, and there is little to fear from men: "I am in a pagan country, where house-breaking, pocket-picking, etc., are unknown; in fact, I feel a great deal safer here than I should in my quiet town of Salem."

With large rooms and fourteen-foot ceilings, the house is perfect. How delightful to "scatter things from one end to the other" and be able to give strict orders to the maid--hired for three dollars a month--"not to touch a thing on the tables or on the floor." Most of his time is spent in the parlor, an eighteen by thirty foot room. Into it go four tables--one for the journal and correspondence, one for "shell-heap" work, one for scientific notes and brachiopods, and one as a "catch-all, though somehow or other the other tables catch a good many things that do not belong on them." In the evening he works here

undisturbed, moving the single kerosene lamp from table to table. Outside, once the shrieking of crows dies with the twilight, absolute quiet reigns, save for the occasional distant high notes of some late reveller staggering towards home, drunk on sake--"these people, when in that condition, seem inclined to sing instead of to fight, as is the common impulse with the Anglo-Saxon or the Irish, and particularly the Irish."

Two days after reaching Tokyo, Morse is on a full schedule--up early, down to the docks to supervise the unloading from a boat of all the specimens collected at Enoshima. By man-powered cart this nucleus of Japan's first zoological museum rolls towards a large room on the ground floor of the main university building. Above it, a science lecture hall is being prepared; nearby, a long, low, building has been set aside as a lab. These rooms, these empty spaces waiting to be filled, become a test of ambition. Nothing less than first-rate facilities, comparable to those in America, will satisfy him. Aided by student assistants, Morse can relive those glorious days in Cambridge seventeen years ago. This time he is an Agassiz, but one hampered by limitations unknown to his mentor. Here both theory and practice--the classification of living things, techniques of dissection, methods of preparing sections and slides for microscopic study, and the means for preserving and displaying specimens--must be taught to beginners. If in 1860 Morse was inexperienced, then his assistants here must be labelled virgins.

Regular work at the university commences on Tuesday morning, September eleventh. First a faculty meeting, then a reception for some fifty foreign professors--German, French, English, Chinese, and American--from the schools of medicine, law, languages, literature and science, an affair featuring sandwiches, cake, fruit, and "pyramids" of ice cream that "would have done credit to the best caterers at home." Classes begin the next day. His hall has been fitted with a blackboard, a desk, and a case holding illustrative objects--shells, starfish, and paper-mache models of the digestive organs and nerve centers of animals. The contents of his lectures are unknown, but one educational desire is clear enough--Morse wants desperately to exercise a certain freedom here denied him at home. Darwinism "pure and simple"--that's what he is looking forward to teaching. His first talk on Evolution comes at the end of the month. The results are highly positive--students express a wish to have an entire course on the subject. Saturday, October 6, brings a more "delightful" feeling. To an attentive audience of some six hundred faculty members and students he outlines "the Darwinian theory without running up against theological prejudice as I often did at home."

The comment is premature. Natives may have no objections, but Protestant missionaries are appalled that this doctrine has followed them across the Pacific. Difficult enough for them to contend with the "paganism" of Shinto, the "Catholicism" of some Buddhist sects, and the immorality of the merchants, sailors, and drifters of the Treaty Ports--now they have another unpleasant idea to combat. As Morse

continues to talk to ever-larger public audiences, the religious community moves into action: prayers go up imploring that this sinner see the light and abandon his "socialistic views," and the popular minister Henry Faulds--founder of the Western hospital in Tsukiji--begins a campaign of articles and lectures against Evolution. Neither divine nor human effort has much effect. Native Protestants may be quick to reconcile Darwinism and Christianity, but opposition raises Morse's anti-religious ire. By the middle of the next year, he is collecting data to show that the expenses of missionaries are "entirely out of proportion to the good they accomplish," and that the teaching of their "peculiar" views is a hindrance to the progress of Japan.

More important than what is who Morse teaches. At least to judge by the journal, which says nothing about courses and plenty about students. With them it is love at first sight, or perhaps first lecture. Each of his two classes has enrollments of forty-five, and every young man seems modest, quiet, attentive, and "greedy to learn." How different from attitudes home and from his own wayward school days. Memories of pranks played on teachers--blackboards greased, chalk stolen, tacks placed on seats--underlie his favorable reaction to students in this land where nobody has to say "Boys will be boys" to excuse behavior that can be "barbarous and savage." Here young men show a respect for professors and a deep seriousness about studies that win Morse's heart. He enjoys visiting their rooms; takes delight in learning the nicknames for his colleagues ("Cube," "Cuttlefish"); spends long hours helping favorites in the lab; attends the funeral and

composes the epitaph for the gravestone of one who dies of beriberi; and oversees the formation of a biological society where research findings are presented and issues discussed just as in scientific meetings back home.

A few of the best students help with the beginning of another major project. On the first train-ride to Tokyo in June, Morse caught sight of a heap of shells in a railway cut near Omori station. The words "kitchen midden" jumped to mind and teased him for the next three months. In Maine and Massachusetts he had visited such ancient refuse heaps, where friends, spurred by Darwin's theories, were hard at work investigating these significant remains of prehistoric man. Now it is his turn to take a step towards archeology. Carrying a letter from the principal engineer of the railroad and accompanied by three students with no implements, he takes the train to Omori station on Sunday, September 16. On the half-mile hike back along the track, Morse explains what they will find: ancient pottery, worked bones, and possibly some crude stone implements. For the young men, it is a good lesson in the predictive possibilities of science. When they reach the site, voices begin to clamor that he "must have been there before." Barely beneath the earth, just as predicted, there they are--bones, clay tablets, and heaps of shards from "unique forms of pottery."

Now to turn a good thing into something better. A week later he returns with Dr. Murray and two workmen bearing hoes and trowels for a two-hour dig, and on October 9 he leads two students, two professors--Yatabe and Toyama--six laborers, and General Le Gendre, an American

adviser to the War Department, on a day-long excavation with shovels. Back to the university go more than three hundred pounds of material. All this is arranged in a room, the beginnings of an archeological museum that immediately draws the attention of local newspapers and Japanese scholars. Fascinated by the "diversity of ornamentation," Morse devotes a good deal of time to drawing fragments of pottery, then begins to prepare papers both scholarly and popular. His first presentation, "Traces of Early Man in Japan" is delivered to the most mixed audience he has ever faced--Americans, Europeans, English and Japanese--at a meeting of the Asiatic Society in Yokohama on October 13. Two years later a thirty-six page monograph, "Shell Mounds of Omori," becomes the first publication of Tokyo University Press and draws a letter of praise from Charles Darwin. But long before that his accomplishment is publicly acknowledged at the highest levels. In December, 1877--a month after Morse leaves for home to fulfill winter speaking engagements--the Emperor himself makes a visit to an exhibition of Omori antiquities. Ever after, the American hired as a zoologist is honored as the father of archeology in Japan.

Wandering. He is wandering in the streets, floating from place to place. Not Edward S. Morse, the man who has no time to waste. Yes, the selfsame. Poking into shops; watching jugglers, acrobats, sand artists; feeding tame monkeys; buying candy from strolling salesmen and handing it out to street kids; sampling baked grasshoppers. Losing his

sense of time, of space. Taking two hours for the one-mile walk to Asakusa; leaving the laboratory and purposefully turning the wrong way in order to lose himself in unknown areas of the city; waving away the rickshaw and strolling home from school by the most circuitous of routes. What has gotten into the man? We know him too well to easily believe such reports, even written in his own hand. Difficult to remember a time when he even lost himself for ten minutes, let alone an hour or an afternoon. Recreation, yes; he has purposefully tramped through the country, climbed mountains all over New England. Such activities can be justified--they are healthful, good for one, a way of offsetting too much food and too many cigars. But to wander and wonder--such behavior is unprecedented.

Impossible to be precise about when it begins. Shortly after the return from Enoshima, hints first appear in the journal, phrases and sketches hidden among all the reports of work. Only later does a pattern emerge--something is changing, something has changed. His interests, his vision of the world--one is tempted to say his values, but that is more difficult to demonstrate. Some kind of turning point, some step in a new direction can be seen in his response to Japan's First National Industrial Exhibition. Mounted in Ueno Park, just a mile from Kaga Yashiki, the expo is dedicated to the future, to all that is modern, forward-looking, progressive. Its temporary wooden buildings are in Western style, with separate structures devoted to machinery, farming, natural products and art--a total of sixteen thousand exhibitors, one hundred thousand items on display, and masses

of visitors every day from the opening in late August to the closing in November.

Seven times Morse is drawn to Ueno, down the long aisle of pines, past the booths vending food, under the imposing old gate and through turnstiles that remind him of the U. S. Centennial in Philadelphia just the year before. But he is not here for the reasons one might suspect. Only the first day does he linger in the industrial pavilion, "astonished" at the progress in Japanese manufacturing, at the clocks, telegraphic instruments, microscopes, electrical machines, and air pumps, at the clothing, boots and shoes, chairs and varieties of furniture. More compelling are the traditional crafts--flower boxes made of worm-eaten wood, black with age; panels of cedar decorated with metal birds and bamboo; wall reliefs of flowers, grass, and autumn leaves cast in bronze, silver and gold; large lacquer screens with forests, fish, and birds--and all images rendered with a startling "purity of design" and a remarkable "truthfulness to nature." On the first visit, he criticizes a black lacquer table where a silver moon reflects gold on a dark sea--"It is such violations of truth in many forms of Japanese art which irritate us." On the second he vows to visit the place twice a week "to make a study of its art treasures." By the seventh, he can accept the distortion of objects as a way of heightening a kind of artistic truth.

Similar attitudes carry into the wanderings. Never does he pen a word about the new Bricktown area of Ginza, with its bright lamps; no longer does he seek out evidence of "progress" or feel cheered by the

sound of a sewing machine coming from a traditional home. Sweeter now to hear the chant of Chinese classics in schoolboy voices, or the sound of samisen or koto, or the cries of peddlers vending wares. Such traditional things help to slow him down, allow him to acknowledge that at home people have little time for common pleasures; they hurry along "bent on business" or "ride in closed cars and see but little that is going on." Walking here or riding in a rickshaw allows you to experience things more deeply. Once the "bewilderment and novelty" of the vast city wear off, there is plenty of opportunity to indulge the taste for crafts whetted by the expo, to find that the humble worker in shell, wood, stone, leather, bark, and wicker is, by American standards, a master, whose skills of design and execution "beat us out and out." Thoughts of a book devoted to these "household arts" come to Morse's mind; so does a wish for money and leisure enough to "collect every kind of an object of this nature."

No time for that now. A growing desire to capture the beauty encountered everywhere must be expressed in other ways. Sketch-book in hand, Morse roams the streets on the track of pleasing sights--wall hangings, works in wood and metal, baskets, the elaborate and curious signs for shops selling tabi, rope, brushes, rice cakes, sugar plums, gold, candies, wigs, combs, and umbrellas. As the eyes begin to change, to grow more sophisticated, he records moments that can only be explained on aesthetic grounds, that have all the qualities of a painting he might like to see--the stark image of a solitary girl set against a typical background of drab, dingy, unpainted buildings,

"walking along dressed for company, her hair black and shining like . . . beautiful lacquer, her sash, or obi, strikingly brilliant in color, with face whitened with powder, bright red lips, and the whitest of stockings and cleanest of sandals."

Unexpected images like this are possible anywhere. They make the streets a "never ending source of enjoyment," an informal school, a way of learning more about this civilization and--non-verbally to be sure--of losing and confronting the self. Proof of this can only be seen indirectly, in changes of language and style. Morse has always been a man you might quote for information, but never for imagery. And yet something in Tokyo in the fall of 1877 can momentarily change his normally flat prose into a succession of sharp, compact images, a kind of poetic evocation, a celebration of the romance of the streets:

"You are sure to see something new and you never tire of old: the low and queer-looking houses; the odd signs and fluttering awnings; children running across the path of your jinrikisha with their long sleeves flying; women with their highly dressed hair and always bareheaded, the older women waddling like ducks and the younger ones scuffing along; women nursing their children in the streets, in the shops, and even while riding in jinrikishas; peddlers of all kinds; traveling shows; restaurants; stationary and peripatetic hawkers of fish, of toys, of candy; pip-repairers; shoe-menders; barbers with their ornamental box,--all with different street cries, some like the call of a strange bird; blind men and women strolling along the street blowing whistles; two old women and a girl, with cracked voices and a

cracked guitar, singing; a bald-headed man with a bell who prays in front of your house for a tenth of a cent; another man reciting stories with a laughing group about him. . . . Everybody walks in the streets, for there are no sidewalks--handsome-looking little boys are seen on their way to school, or a group of highly dressed little girls with powdered faces riding in jinrikishas bound for some gathering--and all the while such a clatter of wooden clogs on the hard roadway and a continual hum of voices. People profoundly bowing to one another; the interminable shops lining the streets, all open from side to side and all the activities fully exposed; the umbrella-maker, lantern-maker, fan-painter, seal-cutter, every craft being practiced in open daylight, all seem like a grotesque dream. . . ."

Fine. But don't overdo the artistic sense, the poetry, the wandering. And don't exaggerate his sense of leisure. Morse in Japan remains what he has been all his life--a man locked in a silent struggle with time. Like a latter-day Ben Franklin, his days are filled with a pursuit of practical truths that can be shared with a world hungry to understand itself. So wandering does not come easily and does not come often, and when it does, it may be followed by spasms of guilt over time wasted and a renewed dedication to his normal pursuits. At least that would explain the polar swings, the contradictory attitudes that mark his years in Japan. Admissions of the joy of relaxation--the pleasures of a day-long sumo wrestling

tournament, of an afternoon sports meet, or an evening at Kabuki--have to be balanced against all those complaints over "precious moments" lost while watching dancers at a restaurant, or the abrupt and early departure from several dinners--including official ones--on the grounds of having "a lot of work to do."

Any confusion here is ours--not his. It springs from the desire to understand changes that he accepts silently, or perhaps does not notice at all. Not that he is wholly blind. Alterations in attitude--"my point of view is continually changing here"--are easy enough to admit. But broader changes in the self go unmentioned. No doubt lack of perspective prevents him from seeing a pattern obvious to us, just as lack of vocabulary prevents us from clearly delineating this pattern. How, after all, does one talk sensibly about something that lacks weight, height, distance, and color, that is always in process and never complete? By analogy, perhaps. Take food. The pattern that begins at Enoshima continues. At the end as at the beginning of his three-year stay, he is always "getting accustomed" to native meals or "acquiring a taste for almost everything." Trips to remote areas of the northern island of Yezo and the western island of Kyushu turn his stomach into a "dietetic laboratory." He brags about being able to get along on all manner of food--urchin eggs, sea cucumber, marine worms, and other "things that I do not know and cannot even guess what they are." Sometimes at specially prepared foreign dinners, he complains that a Japanese meal would have been preferable. Yet whenever he has

to live for several weeks on seafood, fish, rice, and tea, a desire for the homey taste of bread and butter never fails to recur.

To understand this we must accept Morse in all his complexity, as a bundle of beliefs that contains many contradictions. That he has acquired a taste for Japanese food is certainly true; that he prides himself on this acquisition is even more so. But this new set of tastes supplements rather than replaces life-long pleasures of the table. Raw fish can be superb, but will never be quite as good as beefsteak; tea can be very refreshing, but ultimately no real substitute for coffee, or beer. The same goes for everything else. He can wander the streets and lose himself, but this hardly becomes habit enough to interfere with duties. He can greatly admire the manners of the people and learn to bow, without ever giving up a blunt manner of speaking that would be impossible to any Japanese. He can enjoy the spare simplicity of rooms, yet turn every space he occupies into a jumble and clutter. He can, one might say, begin to be Japanized, but make no mistake--this does not mean that Morse can or will ever cease to be a Yankee. Which is only to say that any story of change is of necessity also one of continuity.

"May 1, 1878. How strange it seems to begin the journal again and in the same house where I made most of the records before. Our trip across the continent was extremely pleasant, and on the plains I studied the groups of Indians at the stations and was interested to see

among them certain resemblances to the Japanese: whether these resemblances betray any ethnic affinity with the Japanese can be learned only after long and careful study. There are certain superficial resemblances: their black hair, the depression of the nasals, and other similarities have led some to suggest a common origin."

Back at Kaga Yashiki after a six months absence. The family is with him now. Through the thin walls he can no doubt hear them--eight-year-old John, thirteen-year-old Edith, and wife Nellie, moving around as they settle into what will be home for the next eighteen months. The Japanese government has done well for its professor of zoology--fresh paint on the walls, new paper on the sliding doors, clean, sweet-smelling tatami on the floors. But it is beyond the powers of any agency to make it easy for an American family to set up a household in Tokyo. For more than three weeks Morse, accompanied by servants, has frantically combed the city for furniture, dishes and all the other necessary goods so easily obtainable at home, so "impossible to find" here. Now the job is done and the house as well equipped as it can be, given the circumstances. At last there is time for work and the journal.

To turn to the written page is to escape from the world of family life. In the months to come, the children will be mentioned but rarely and his wife not at all. But Japan--how it comes full of bright colors, present and past. Those of the countryside first claim his pen. So different now from June the year before. Today everything is

fresh--black rice fields patched with the bright yellow of rape; the pink and white cherry and plum; camellia trees crowded with blossoms; dwarf maples blazing with tiny red leaves. Strolling the vast grounds of the estate, past tumbled bamboo fences and over mounds that were part of some ornamental garden long gone to seed, the man who once claimed to be "too much absorbed in present things . . . to look backward" is caught by some wayward spirit of the past. Less than ten years ago the Shogun was in power; the yashiki filled with armed samurai, artisans and servants; the gates locked at six o'clock every evening. No foreigner dwelt in Yedo then, or even visited unless a high representative of some alien government--yet here he was, a grown-up boy from Maine, "roaming round the city unguarded and unmolested."

Feelings of security vanish two weeks later on a bright muggy day when history bursts through the boundaries of nostalgia. Count Okubo, a leading modernizer and father of a student of Morse, is hacked to death by eight young ex-samurai less than half a mile from the college grounds. To someone who has lived through the Civil War, politics of the sword are not unknown, but the issues here startling reminder of an anti-modern, anti-foreign feeling never met with face-to-face. Not that there is much time to dwell on such thoughts. Justice is swift and clean. The culprits give themselves up, are tried and executed immediately: "There was no plea of emotional insanity; no indictment under a wrong initial . . . no trial in a wrong court; no appeal to higher courts or disagreements among the jury with the result that the criminal finally goes free: all so different from the way they manage

matters in our blessed country, which as a consequence has the highest murder rate in the world."

Safety returns and the journal continues--but something is different this time around. Not necessarily for Morse, but the reader--and yet, how to put it? All the details are less interesting than before. In the published version you are at page four hundred of the first volume. Behind him are five months in Japan and half a year away that certainly included some time for reflection, at least on those two long voyages back and forth across the Pacific. Yet once he settles into Kaga Yashiki with the family, the entries go on almost as if he has seen nothing, learned nothing, and thought nothing. No new levels here of understanding or self-reflection. Instead, observations of the sort we already know too well--the "wonderful" complexity of hill, plant, rock, and bridge that make up the two-hundred fifty year old garden at Shiba Rikyu; the pleasure of dining at the home of Professor Toyama, "who lives in true Japanese style," or at a famous tea house amidst "the simple beauties and the cleanliness of the rooms"; the pride in speaking on Omori finds to an archeological club or delivering the first public lecture ever given to a general Japanese audience; the amazement at the willingness of people "to learn and to help" in the perpetual hunt for land and water shells.

Enough. Suddenly it is enough. You are tired of smiling, polite people with exquisite manners, tired of children who never fuss or cry, tired of honest merchants, helpful rickshaw men, graceful waitresses, skillful carpenters, fearless fire-fighters, jolly vendors, smiling

priests, elegant ladies; you are tired of street festivals, actors in masks, beautiful gardens, colorful kimonos, weathered shrines, elaborate coiffures, clever toys, immaculate rooms, artful shop signs, unique designs for umbrellas, baskets, pottery, tools, and flower holders in bamboo, wicker, ceramic, and wood; tired above all of hearing that chopsticks are efficient and economical and should be used around the world. You begin to think about--no, to positively desire--anger, awkwardness, hostility, ugliness, cruelty, rudeness, racism, incompetence. From Morse you won't get them, even though he has watched criminals march through the streets, ankles chained together; visited insane asylums; seen friends overcharged at an Enoshima inn; gone through sections of town where the Eta, former outcasts, still dwell in unofficial segregation--has in short touched the darker side of this society. To ask why he does not make more of such things is to ask him to be a different man. No social critic, he is not much interested in what might be wrong with Japan. By now he only seems to care what it might have to teach.

That is not the only thing about the diary that calls for explanation. Remember: twice as many pages are given to the initial five month period as to the second one of eighteen, with half of these devoted to two scientific trips that total but three months. Never in this year and a half does he describe teaching; rarely does he mention students, the lab, the museum of archeology. When it comes to events, only the extraordinary seem worthy of description--the first visit to a newspaper office, or the famous Mitsui silk store, or the newly-opened

Shintomiza Kabuki theater in Kyobashi, with its play that lasts eleven hours. Most impressive is the first Tokyo winter and New Year's holiday season, a time of street fairs in the snow, of "gayly clad" girls playing battledore and shuttlecock, of boys flying kites, of house fronts decorated with pine, bamboo, and plum, of crowded shrines and temples that give the lie to missionary reports that the old religions are dying out, of formal house calls and a week of banquets and sake parties that turn cheeks red and loosen the tongues of those who like to sing and laugh until one has to realize "how staid and sober our New England method of celebration of New Year's appears in contrast to all this gayety."

Routine--his own or that of others--clearly does not move Morse to words, and routine is what life becomes, in Tokyo as in Salem. Scientific journeys to Yezo in July of 1878 and Kyushu the following summer are full of new places, landscapes, people, customs and adventures, but the observations on the civilization of Japan only reconfirm those already made. Detailed entries on these jaunts serve another purpose. By now the frivolous notion of writing a book has turned serious. To John Gould go pages of the journal instead of letters, along with brief notes filled with a new kind of worry: Be careful with the manuscript. Get it back from Lowell and Longfellow and don't lend it to anybody else. If it gets lost there will be no way to remember all the details and they are essential. You will find it interesting and so will the public, especially because it will be "chock full of sketches." Brachiopods? Been finding them everywhere,

as far north as Tsuruga Bay, off Hakodate, as far south as Kagoshima, with Sakurajima smoking in the distance. And there's this one funny moment I have to tell you about. May 13, in Nagasaki harbor, a day of "great dredging." Two men and a woman at the sculls and me in fine shape, pulling out "tropical shells, echinoderms, crustaceans" in all kinds of marvelous forms I had never seen before. But it is "difficult to concentrate on the work at hand . . . to bury my head in the mud of the dredge." Blame it on that harbor, the "magnificent views--the long bay hemmed in by high hills, green with foliage from the water to the summits, and the little houses, temples, shrines, hidden in the trees, with flights of stone steps leading up to them." There I am, looking at scenery rather than shells. You know something, John, that's never happened before.

Now the temptation is to do the trips--landscapes, voyages, adventures, incidents, meals, mishaps, dangers, discoveries. Large areas of the country pass before him--goodly sections of Yezo and the Tohoku region of the North, the ancient Yamato area of Kansai, the Inland Sea, the southern and western coasts of Kyushu. No family member goes along, but always an assistant from the university to guide, translate, and arrange official matters for setting up temporary labs, collecting specimens, living, dead, archeological. Enjoyable always to be the only foreigner, to see places that have rarely if ever fallen under Western eyes. Overlapping images. Meetings with people

noble and low-born, ex-samurai and fishermen. Dinners with governors of half a dozen provinces in exquisite traditional homes full of ancient scrolls. Meals taken in the filthy huts of the "savage" Ainu, where the decorations are animal skins, racks of poison-tipped arrows, purple tattoos around the mouths of adult women. Shots of Morse on steamer, rickshaw, and riverboat, on foot along narrow mountain paths or plains thick with summer rice. Of him being thrown twice while learning to ride a horse in Otaru, then crossing the hundred and fifty miles to Sapporo in the saddle.

New experiences, some negative. On the five hundred mile ride from Aomori to Tokyo, an old woman scowls; somewhere else two ruffians attempt to crowd him off the road. In Nagasaki, the most international of Japanese cities, the natives are indifferent to foreigners, even impolite. Kagoshima, starting point of last year's rebellion against the Meiji regime, is worse--the glares of the defeated, taunts, rude words, open hostility. How much more pleasant are the old centers of culture. Osaka impresses with the great ruins of Toyotomi Hideyoshi's sixteenth century castle, built of blocks that seem too huge for the technology of the time. Nara, the eighth century capital, dreams with a spirit of "antiquity," charms with grand, old temples, a vast park full of tame deer and Shosoin, a wooden storehouse that preserves intact the entire contents--utensils, books, furniture, clothing, weapons, fans, mirrors, weapons--of an early emperor's palace. Kyoto, too lovely for words, smoothed by a thousand years of art, refinement, sobriety, civilization. And somewhere on these travels the feeling

slowly grows that this all must be part of him, and then the day when it comes true. One of those moments of nothing special really, and yet everything. At a Kyushu inn an officer arrives to invite him to dinner with the governor. This "delightful" gentleman bows so profoundly that Morse automatically responds in kind: "How natural it seemed to me to be kneeling on the floor and bowing again and again till my head repeatedly touched the mat." Sometimes the body knows things better than the brain. Even when involved in this most solemn act of courtesy, Morse claims "I could not help laughing at myself."

Collecting. He is collecting again, and with all the energy once devoted to shells. Collecting, but now something little known outside Japan and distinctly alien to foreign taste--pottery. Not the porcelain treasured in the West. That is of little interest. What touches Morse is the stoneware that derives from chanoyu, the tea ceremony, developed in the sixteenth century under the guidance of such masters as Sen no Rikyu. Simple, restrained, with minimal decoration, this ware is created in line with an aesthetic of wabi and shibui--austerity, sobriety, and feelings of loneliness, like those that grow with the slow fade of a sunset. Little color, rough surfaces, blisters, crackle glazes, accidental lumps, and odd indentations--these are its treasured characteristics. So refined, even decadent, is this cult of the plain and simple that among the most highly valued items are common bowls made for daily use by unknown peasant potters of

Korea. Scorned by the educated in their country of origin such works can be considered masterpieces of a high art by Japanese collectors.

This new taste calls for explanation. Any Westerner has to wonder at first "what there is to admire" about such work. His own appreciation grows slowly and--unusual word for Morse--"unconsciously." The comment dates from February, 1879, a first reference to what by summer will be a "passion." Inexplicable if familiar. Put it this way: there are "natural born" collectors and he knows himself to be one. This begs the historical question--when, why and how did the love affair begin? The only attempt to supply answers has been made by Morse's first biographer. Late in 1878--the story goes--his nerves and digestion are out of whack. Ten years of lecture tours, train rides, restaurant meals, and hotel beds, first in America and now in Japan--these are the culprits. As a remedy, a doctor prescribes not medicine but a five-mile daily walk, and when Morse objects to the boredom involved, recommends he pursue a hobby at the same time. The result: one day soon he comes home with a small, ceramic saucer that is an exact replica of a scallop shell. Picked up casually in a local shop, this crudely-made item leads to all the rest.

Neat. Possible. Consonant with what we know of the man and his habits. But--horror of horrors--wholly unfootnoted. Let us put aside the obvious question--who is the author of this book to complain about lack of footnotes in another? And let us admit that the consequences of this first purchase are far easier to discern than its origins. Evidently Morse is first tutored informally in pottery by friends and

colleagues, then somehow becomes acquainted with Ninagawa Noritane, a bearded, wispy scholar, who has published a book on the ceramic traditions of Japan. First the American learns how to identify different styles, clays, kilns, lineages, and the all-important potter's marks. Then he hears the history of "native collectors and collections." For hundreds of years now, pottery, porcelain, swords, coins, kakemono (scrolls), and roofing tiles have been cherished here. But the Japanese collect in a manner different from foreigners--they tend to specialize less, to make aesthetic qualities paramount, and are "never so systematic or scientific and generally not so curious nor so exact as to the age and locality of the objects."

Here is the opening that lets desire move towards obsession. The child who once wished to make a complete collection of Maine land shells still lives. What in the winter months is called a "little collection" has by spring become an attempt to obtain "representative pieces" from a wide variety of traditions and regions. His guide in this endeavor is Ninagawa. Every Sunday at Kaga Yashiki the two men spend the afternoon hours kneeling on the floor to study the pieces that Morse has purchased during the week at Tokyo's second-hand stores. The scientist is a good student. An eye that can locate the genitals of a brachiopod, or identify thousands of species of mollusks and worms, can readily learn to recognize variations in clay, glaze, and potter's marks. It can also begin to grasp the subtle aesthetic of the art, to differentiate between the commonplace and the beautiful, to lust after the best.

By summer of 1879, pottery competes with shells. Special stops on the Kyushu trip allow Morse to examine private collections and spend many "charming" hours handling antique works. At an official dinner in Kagoshima, he succumbs to flattery. The journal notes that the governor of the province "expressed his amazement several times that a foreigner, whose interests were supposed to be in other directions, had learned to distinguish so quickly the Chinese, Korean, and Japanese pottery"--but there is no explanation here that this is, in fact, not a particularly difficult thing to do. Near Yatsushiro he spends a rainy afternoon pulling prehistoric vessels from an ancient tomb filled with poisonous centipedes. The governor of that province offers as a gift four Koda tea cups, made to the order of his father twenty years before the end of the Tokugawa regime.

Kyoto is the high point of the journey, the perfect place to indulge oneself in ceramics. At the beginning of summer he arrives there and, unlike other tourists, devotes little energy to the hundreds of historic temples nestled in the suburbs of the longtime capital. Pottery districts draw him--Kioymizu, Gojiosaka, Awata--and days go largely to local kilns. Most are small, family operations, with everyone from children to grandparents involved in the leisurely production of highly refined works. The exceptions are instructive. A few have switched to "making stuff" for export, to answering orders for, say, a hundred thousand cups and saucers in bright red and gold. The result: compounds full of feverish activity, with hired workers "slapping it out by the gross," splashing on decorations of flowers or

butterflies "in sickening profusion." Naturally the workmanship is terrible and the results wholly contrary to the "exquisite reserve" of objects used by the Japanese themselves. No wonder they believe foreigners to be people with "barbaric" taste!

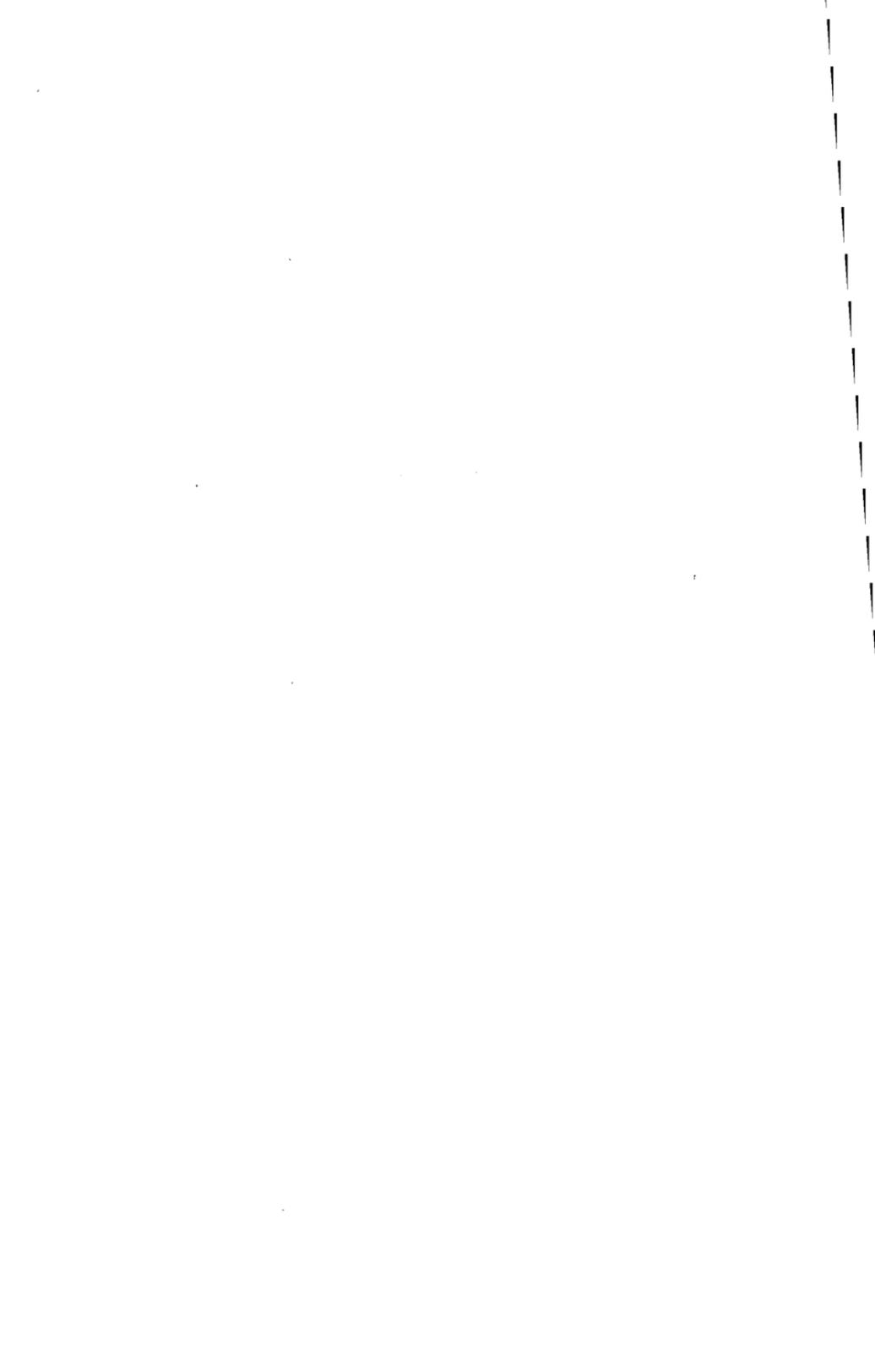
Traditional kilns like Dohachi, Kichizaemon, Yeiraku, Rokubei, Kitei--that's where his real interest lies. And more than collecting is on his mind. Morse is doing research, and that takes more time than any working potter can afford to give. Don't worry. A slight payment in advance smooths the way. At each modest but lovely workshop home, the inevitable greeting from the aged head of the family over the inevitable tea and cakes. Then hours to watch potters throw, decorate, glaze, and fire; to sketch the hillside brick and mortar ovens, built on Chinese models; to take an occasional turn at the wheel himself. The highlight of each visit is an interview with senior potters. Questions about the origins of each kiln, the history of the family, and styles of the past are followed by a detailed examination of works old and new, and by the exacting, precise labor of copying the markings, or signatures, of each generation. This is the tip-off that something grandiose is in the works. Morse leaves Kyoto satisfied with "large additions to my pottery studies." But if he has plans, if he knows where these studies are heading, he never confides this to the pages of his journal. No doubt it all remains at some unconscious level. Like us, he cannot foresee where this passion for pottery will lead.

Endings are never easy. Ambition, family duty, isolation--all are there in a letter to Gould, written in May, 1879, four months before departure: "I want to get out my Japanese book while the vim is on me. I want to get out my Second Book of Zoology while I am young. I want to publish a popular work on Evolution while it is still remembered, for if I wait much longer it would be like working on a book trying to prove that the Earth revolves, etc. This, however, is all selfish; Edith is growing up, so is John. They are literally alone in having no playmates and they have no competition in their studies. They must have that stimulus. I need the same. The Boston Society of Natural History meetings I miss. So I come home and face starvation . . . with a courage only equalled by my paganism."

Not much of note happens in those final months. Presumably he refuses a contract renewal. Without doubt he is feted at many lavish banquets given by students, colleagues, friends, and government officials. No journal entries mention farewell lectures, final moments in the laboratory, last glimpses of the glass cases and expanding displays at the archeological and zoological museums. When Ulysses S. Grant reaches Tokyo on the final leg of a world-wide tour in July and the American community gives a dinner reception in Ueno Park, Morse subscribes but, typically, decides he has "no time for such affairs." After friends urge him to "do the proper thing," he reluctantly attends. A longtime "prejudice" against the general vanishes as soon as they shake hands in the reception line. The man is quiet,

dignified, soft-spoken, and at dinner he does not "touch a drop of wine of any kind." So much for all those wartime stories and "the infernal slanders of our newspapers." Morse rushes off to Kaga Yashiki, wakes his son and hurries him back to the reception, anxious "that he might remember in after years that he had seen the great General."

Rainy season, muggy season--the days dribble away. The mind is suspended. Japan begins to recede but America draws no closer. Through an interpreter he has the honor of delivering four lectures to an audience of the highest nobility in the auditorium of the Nobles' School, attended only by the children of longtime aristocrats and top-level samurai. His final public appearance is at the famed secondary school of Fukuzawa Yukichi, one of Japan's leading theorists of Westernization. Evolution is the topic and the illustrated lecture easily understood because the Japanese are so "familiar with the plants and animals of their own country." The best part of the day comes after the talk. Dressed in thickly-wadded armor, wearing helmets and holding long foils of bamboo, the future leaders of the nation give a stunning demonstration of swordplay. Forty years later Morse lets the paragraphs on this traditional martial art remain the final ones in the published diary of his Japan teaching years. Perhaps he neither sees nor means anything symbolic, but how can we refrain from noting that the man who has introduced three sciences to Japan--zoology, archeology, and anthropology--ends with this admiration for the spirit of something past:



"The class was divided into two groups of fifty, the leader of each class standing back with his retainers protecting him. The leaders had tied on top of the hood a disk of soft pottery, two and a half inches in diameter, with two holes for the string, and the object was to smash the disk of the opponent. The noise of the clash was terrific; the slats of bamboo made a resounding whack, though the blows did no damage. Mr. Fukuzawa called my attention to one of the boys who was the son of a famous fencing master. It was wonderful to see the dash with which he penetrated the crowd and smashed the pottery disk on the head of his opponent. This disk flew into many fragments, and one could instantly see the result of the combat. Though the boys wore long-sleeved gauntlets, many came out of the fray with bruises and bleeding scratches on their wrists."