

OBITUARY NOTICES

Hosea Ballou Morse

Hosea Ballou Morse was a Canadian by birth, having been born at Brookfield, Nova Scotia, on 18th July, 1855. He was the eldest son of Albert David Morse and Mercy Dexter (Park) and came of a family which traced its descent from Massachusetts ancestry of the 1635 flight. But his grandfather's grandfather in 1776 was a loyalist, who, when George Washington entered Boston, thought it better to accompany Sir William Howe to Halifax where he obtained a commission in the Royal Legion.

Nearly a century later the family returned to Massachusetts, Albert David Morse settling in Medford in 1865, when Hosea was 10 years old. The father became naturalized as a citizen of the United States, and the son became an American with him. In 1866 Hosea Morse entered the Boston Latin School, taking the short course, and on graduation in June, 1870, obtained the Franklin medal. The brilliant intellectual equipment which so marked the whole of his life was already showing itself. Though only 16 he proceeded to Harvard, and devoted himself mainly to classics, for which he had a great liking and aptitude, and in which he took a First Class (*summus honores*) on graduation.

Immediately after graduation in 1874, at the age of 19, he received an appointment in the Chinese Maritime Customs Service, on the recommendation, it is believed, of Mr. Edward B. Drew, a New Englander, who, though still quite a young man, had already achieved a distinguished position as a Commissioner of Customs in that Service, and was one of that brilliant group of young men of various nationalities who gave Mr. (as he then was) Robert Hart such effective co-operation in the building up of his Service.

Three other young Harvard graduates went to China

with Morse—H. F. Merrill, W. F. Spinney, and C. C. Clarke—of whom Mr. Merrill alone survives; and of the many batches of men from various countries who elected to serve China under Hart, this was surely one of the most remarkable. They were all men of sterling character and good ability; all four served their full time in China and did valuable work in important positions; while one of them, the subject of our memoir, accomplished, outside his official activities, a vast statistical and historical work which places him in the first rank among writers upon China.

Robert Hart soon saw that this young recruit was of uncommon calibre, and Morse had not been long in the Service before he found himself selected for some of the special missions and appointments which the Inspector-General held in his gift. His first three years were passed in Shanghai, where he laid the foundations of his knowledge of Chinese. In 1877 he was transferred to Tientsin and while there was sent into the interior of the province on famine relief work, to distribute money and food in the district affected by the great famine of 1876–7. In 1878 he was appointed to the Inspectorate-General at Peking, whence he passed on to the London office of the Chinese Customs in 1879, where he remained for three years. The office was then under the charge of Mr. J. D. Campbell, C.M.G., and its chief occupation at that time was the responsible task of supervising the construction of the ships built in England for the Chinese Navy which was being formed by Li Hung-Chang.

It was while he was in London that Morse married Annie Josephine Welsford, daughter of Joseph Welsford, ship-owner, of Liverpool and New York, a devoted helpmate who not only accompanied him to all the dangerous places of his career, but whose unceasing care of his health made possible the accomplishment of his vast labours.

In 1883 Morse was back in China again and once more appointed to Tientsin. The Commissioner there was a German, Gustav Detring, one of the great figures of the

China of his time, and the trusted adviser of the Viceroy Li Hung-chang who was the virtual ruler of the Chinese Empire under the Empress Dowager. Morse became Detring's right-hand man, and in July, 1885, was sent on a special mission to Tongking to supervise the exchange of prisoners on the conclusion of peace with France after the Franco-Chinese war, one of China's troubles from which, thanks to Hart's diplomacy, she emerged comparatively unscathed. For this service Morse received the Chinese Order of the Double Dragon.

In the same year he was seconded from the Customs Service to assist in the organization and management of the China Merchants Steam Navigation Company, one of Li Hung-chang's enterprises, an officially subsidized shipping company, established with the object of competing with the foreign-owned steamer lines on the Chinese coast.

In 1887 Morse returned to Customs duty as Deputy Commissioner charged with the organization of the bonding system at Shanghai. The next year he was appointed Assistant Statistical Secretary at Shanghai; in 1889 Acting Commissioner at Pakhoi, and in 1892, after two years leave, Acting Commissioner at Tamsui, Formosa. Then came the Chino-Japanese war; Formosa fell to Japan as part of the spoils of war, and the Chinese Customs staff was withdrawn. An interesting account of his experiences during this crisis was given by Morse in his article "A Short-lived Republic" which appeared in the *New China Review* in 1919, and which shows, incidentally, the nerve and resource displayed by him at a moment when all foreigners in Formosa stood in grave peril between the contending forces.

His next appointment was Deputy Commissioner in the Shanghai Customs, and in 1896 he was promoted to full Commissioner's rank and sent to Lungchow on the Tongking frontier, perhaps as remote and forlorn a spot as could be found among China's list of frontier posts. From here he went as Commissioner to Pakhoi, only a degree better, whence

he proceeded in 1899 to Hankow with the special mission of opening up the province of Hunan to foreign trade.

This long spell of unceasing work and exposure to some of the worst climates in the Far East told upon a constitution never robust, and from 1900 to 1902 he was away from China on leave with his health seriously shattered. He recovered sufficiently to return and be Commissioner in Canton in 1903 and in 1904 was sent to Shanghai as Statistical Secretary.

In that department of the Inspectorate-General where the trade statistics of China are laboriously collated and published in great volumes full of valuable information little regarded even in China and hardly known at all outside of it, Morse found his appropriate place. Here was got together all that was to be known of the trade, with much matter bearing on the political and economic condition of the Chinese people and their commercial dealings with foreign countries. The study of these vast subjects offered a field entirely congenial to Morse's genius, and shaken in health as he was, he threw himself into the work with his accustomed ardour. During the four years in which he had charge of the department he not only reformed the whole system of the arrangement and presentation of the statistics of trade, but began a whole series of special studies which resulted ultimately in the production of those great books which form almost an encyclopædia upon Chinese trade and government.

These enormous labours might well have broken a strong man, and with his frail physique and constant ill-health it is amazing that they were accomplished. In 1908, quite broken down, he went on leave. By Imperial Decree in 1909 he was given Civil rank of the Second Class (red button), and on the expiration of his leave in that year he retired and settled in England, only to be driven to Switzerland and Germany in search of the relief which the doctors here were unable to give him. In 1910 he was given up, but in spite of this verdict of his physicians he gradually recovered; not only

recovered, indeed, but lived for another twenty-four years to do much more important work.

In 1913 he returned to England and settled at Camberley, where he remained until his death. In 1917, profoundly affected by the war, he took out British naturalization papers and resumed the British status in which he had been born. In September, 1920, he went to Brussels as expert adviser to the Chinese delegation at the Financial and Economic Conference, and in 1922 received by Presidential Mandate the Order of the Chia Ho, Second Class.

His most important works are :—

- 1908 (3rd edition 1921). *The Trade and Administration of China* (dedicated to his three Harvard colleagues).
 1909. *The Guilds of China*.
 1910. *International Relations of the Chinese Empire*, vol. i.
 1918. *International Relations of the Chinese Empire*, vols. ii and iii.
 1926-9. *Chronicles of the East India Company in China, 1635-1834*, 5 vols.
 1927. *In the Days of the Taipings* (an historical retrospect given by him to the Essex Institute, Salem, Mass., U.S.A.).

Morse also wrote many articles in magazines and papers, and some pamphlets, the most notable being "A Short-lived Republic" (already referred to); "Currency in China" (in the *Journal* of the North China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society); "Extraterritoriality in China" (*Journal* of Central Asian Society, 1923); "Concessions and Settlements in China" (*Nineteenth Century & After*, July, 1928). In June, 1913, he delivered an address before the Western Reserve University on "The Repayment by the West of its debt to the East". This brilliant paper reveals him at his best—in the depth and scope of his knowledge and his power of literary expression.

At one time and another he served in various extra-official

capacities of which two are worthy of note. He was several times Secretary, and from 1904-7 he was Vice-President of the North China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society. Just before his final departure from Shanghai he was President of the American Association of China. After his retirement he took an active part as a member of the Council of the Royal Asiatic Society in London, and was also on the committee of the China Association.

He had many Chinese honours. He was given the degree of Doctor of Laws by the Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio, in 1913; and in 1924 his own university, Harvard, conferred on him the same honour.

At the end of 1933 his health failed rapidly and he died of heart exhaustion on 13th February, 1934. A man of kindly disposition and winning personality, he left behind him many who held him in great affection. Modest and retiring he did nothing to advertise his achievements. But his remarkable series of works, the triumph of character, genius, and industry over difficulties, will live and speak for him; and we may well believe that Canada, the country of his birth, together with America, China, and England, the countries of his adoption, will all hold his memory in honour.

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C. A. V. BOWRA.

Guy le Strange

Born at Hunstanton in 1854, Guy le Strange was one of our most distinguished members, and also one of the oldest, his connexion with the Society having been unbroken since 1880, when he was elected during the second presidency of Sir Henry Rawlinson, till his death last year, on 24th December, at Cambridge. Between 1880 and 1912, he contributed to the *Journal* many valuable articles, chiefly on Muslim geography, and his Description of the province of Fárs, translated from the *Fársnâma* of Ibn al-Balkhî, was published in 1912, in the Asiatic Society Series of Monographs.