

with the personal reminiscences of several star players from the defunct leagues, athletes who finished their careers "cheering on the youngsters they trained, never tasting what they most coveted," a chance at the major leagues.

**LOW CITY, HIGH CITY:  
Tokyo from Edo to the  
Earthquake, 1867-1923**  
by Edward Seidensticker  
Knopf, 1983  
302 pp. \$20



From a feudal capital in 1867 to a modern metropolis leveled by the Kanto earthquake in 1923, Tokyo underwent a profound transformation that altered neighborhoods and a long-established way of life. Seidensticker, a professor of Japanese at Columbia, explains how strict class lines divided Edo (ancient Tokyo) during the Tokugawa shogunate (1603-1867). Commoners, including a growing mercantile class, occupied the flatlands of the east and north—the Low City. The High City, an area of temples and aristocratic dwellings, filled the hills to the west and south. Liveliest was the Low City, where Kabuki theaters and geisha establishments thrived next to lumberyards, fishmarkets, and brothels. Aristocrats from the High City, "slumming" in grand style, shopped the stores and supported the popular arts. But this arrangement began to break down with the accession of Emperor Meiji in 1867 and his introduction of Western ideas and technology. Merchants, no longer checked by social barriers, began moving into the High City; the rich, both new and old, turned from traditional entertainments and experimented with imports—operas and masked balls; baseball arrived triumphantly upon the scene, though, unaccountably, anglophile Tokyo spurned cricket. New forms of transportation, including the steam locomotive, allowed businesses and ordinary folk to move outside the Low City, further diluting the old neighborhood life. The 1923 earthquake dealt Low City culture its death blow. But Seidensticker has admirably re-created the vibrant, even tumultuous, spirit of those days when kimonos, parasols, and topknots were first traded for trousers, derby hats, and horn-rimmed glasses.