

to lead man to an understanding of his subservience to God. Enjoining his readers to accept the limits of earthly knowledge, he invokes John Milton's words, "be *lowly* wise." While extolling the virtues of the next life, Johnson also suggests how to live well in this one. The maintenance of a "proper intellectual polity"—a balanced attention to sacred and profane matters—promises, according to Robert South, "serenity and complacency upon the whole soul." As for money, the *via media* is best attained by earning what James Thomson called "an elegant *sufficiency*."

As we learn from biographer James Boswell, Johnson derived more than monetary reward from the "muddling work" of lexicography. For a man who believed that life was virtually synonymous with work, the *Dictionary*, DeMaria says, provided "a way of knowing where the time went and of seeing that it was not wasted."

**THE CITY AS
A WORK OF ART**
London, Paris, Vienna
by Donald J. Olsen
Yale, 1986
341 pp. \$35

The 19th century was the best of times for urban architecture. Many of the older cities throughout Europe were transformed into imperial capitals, lavish and ornate symbols of the power and wealth of emerging nation-states.

According to Olsen, a Vassar historian, Paris and Vienna underwent the most dramatic and beneficial changes, but he begins his three-city study with John Nash's design of London's single boulevard, Regent Street. Linking two royal palaces, it was intended by Nash to combine "the functions of a triumphal way with that of a street devoted to the luxury retail trade." This brief burst of monumentalism was followed, from 1850 on, by more prosaic planning goals, including drains and sewers for improved sanitation, and by a drift toward "suburban coziness," as architects and builders catered to the English demand for private homes with small gardens.

Paris received a massive face-lift at midcentury. Baron Haussmann's urban renewal plan razed old landmarks, removed workers' quarters to the suburbs, and introduced the city's *grands boulevards*, where all levels of French society mingled in pursuit of pleasure and commerce.

In Vienna, the development of the Ringstrasse was an assertion of imperial order that defied the historical reality of the rapidly dissolving Haps-

burg state. Nevertheless, it provided "room for the pomp and spectacle of [its] court" as well as for "the time-wasting rituals of [the] leisure classes." It was the latter, of course, that largely inspired the artistic and intellectual flowering of *fin de siècle* Vienna, the subject of much recent scholarship in America.

Although the empires that the three cities were meant to glorify have disappeared, the cities retain their majesty. They are also reminders of the importance of the street as the essential stimulus to urban life and beauty.

Science & Technology

**GREAT AND
DESPERATE CURES**
**The Rise and Decline of
Psychosurgery and Other
Radical Treatments for
Mental Illness**

by Elliot S. Valenstein
Basic, 1986
338 pp. \$19.95

To perform a lobotomy, a surgeon typically would penetrate his patient's skull with an instrument resembling, variously, "an apple corer, a butter spreader, or an ice pick," and then blindly proceed to destroy portions of the prefrontal lobe. Between 1948 and 1952—the heyday of lobotomy—tens of thousands of mentally ill individuals in America, Europe, and Japan had the operation. On some psychotics it had a calming effect. Some died, and many were simply hurt. Yet the demise of psychosurgery during the 1960s resulted not from scientific scrutiny or public outcry but from the introduction of new drugs.

Valenstein, a neuroscientist at the University of Michigan, locates lobotomy within the long debate dividing both psychiatry and neurology since the 19th century. It pits those who believe mental illness is the product of "life experiences" against those who hold that it is biologically caused. To the latter, such drastic procedures as electroshock and lobotomy were more scientific, more truly "medical," than mere "talking" treatments. They also promised quick results.

Valenstein tells the story largely through portraits of two ambitious physicians. Egas Moniz (1874–1955), an aristocratic Portuguese neurologist, performed the first "leucotomy" in 1935 and soon was claiming miraculous improvements in most of his patients. Moniz, who shared the Nobel in 1949, found an eager American disciple in psychiatrist Walter Freeman (1895–1972), who toured the country to perform about 3500 lobotomies. The media was briefly enthralled: "No Worse Than Removing a Tooth" ran the typical cheer of one small-town paper.