socially most disestablished having the worst outlook. There was a slight tendency for older patients to do better than younger ones, but (surprisingly) there was no difference in outcome that could be correlated with sex or education.

Most doctors treating alcoholics subscribe to the dogma that once "loss of control" (in a technical sense) has set in, moderation in drinking cannot be attained thereafter, and the alcoholic must choose between total abstinence or deterioration. Dr. Gerard and Sanger join those who challenge the universal truth of this proposition.

The clinics studied and reported on in this book were among the best-financed of their type in the United States, but the authors tell us that they had grave staffing difficulties, were short of community support, and all "suffered from the burden of their task." Drug treatment was used in most cases, but disulfiram alone appeared to improve the chances of control of drinking. The eight clinics differed considerably in their staffing. Patients treated by internists or social workers did better than those treated by psychiatrists, and the clinic with a predominantly psychiatric orientation had the worst results of all. Patients who became abstinent showed much evidence of continuing maladjustment and unhappiness. The defaulting rate was high: 52% of patients attended on no more than four occasions, and the median duration of contact with the clinic was one month. Addictive alcoholics of previously stable personality (the group so much favoured by Alcoholics Anonymous and by psychiatrists selecting for treatment patients of good prognosis) were clearly a minority among the clientele of the eight clinics. Any service opening its outpatient doors to problem drinkers of all types might find it hard to better these American results.

The literature on alcoholism is in danger of overgrowth, but studies as painstaking as this one are still more than welcome.

DENIS PARR.

**Books Reviewed**

Review is not precluded by notice here of books recently received.


**Diccionario Medicobiologico University. Director:** Dr. Alberto Folch Pi. (Pp. 1501+xxxi; No price given.) Mexico City: Editorial Interamericana, S.A. 1966.


This readable little volume was well worth reprinting both for the story it tells and for the light it throws on the life and work of rather a neglected figure in English obstetric history.

ZACHARI COPEN.

**Surgical Technique**


These two volumes are part of a series of 15, each concerned with surgical technique in different regions. The authors are a number of distinguished French surgeons under the editorship of Professor Jean Patel and Professor Lucien Leger. Of the two books under review, volume 9 is concerned with herniae, techniques of intestinal anastomosis, and various indications for laparotomy, while volume 13 describes the operative treatment of portal hypertension by Leger and the surgery of the spleen by Patel.

The production is of high quality, with good print, good paper, and many excellent illustrations of the various steps in operative technique, which are described in considerable detail. There are, for example, some good drawings of the various knots tied by surgeons, and probably no method of joining two pieces of bowel together has been omitted. The illustrations of operations on portal hypertension and of the spleen are particularly good, and if all the volumes are of the same standard it will certainly form a valuable contribution to the literature of operative surgery, though its size may tend to make it a work of reference in a library rather than one of personal purchase.

EDWARD G. MUIR.