and how? The forensic approach has provided numerous promising reports. These initially implicated the catecholamines (with noradrenaline the prime suspect). Subsequently GABA and the associated benzodiazepine receptor appeared to be involved. Various peptides have come under close scrutiny including the enkephalins and AVP. Now rumours concern the excitatory amino acids, both in terms of presynaptic release and post-synaptic receptors. However, reports from the scene of crime officer have caused confusion. The crucial change did not occur at the obvious site (that is, the site of the intervention producing electrical or chemical kindling, for example the amygdala) but at some distant synapse or synapses (for example in the hippocampus, cortex or substantia nigra). As with most detective mysteries the reader becomes intrigued or frustrated according to the logic or lack of clarity of the narrative. It must be confessed that some of the witnesses are making vague and evasive statements. The discussion sections keep the reader alert (who are Chuck and Pete and Mac? Will the imprecisely described experiments that they plan to do contribute to the solution to the mystery?) Let us hope that the next volume is the final one, and that all the threads are brought ingeniously together.

For those who wonder what purpose this fictional genre serves there is a very well argued chapter by Engel and Cahon on the relevance of kindling to human partial epilepsy.

BS MELDRUM

Tumors of the Skull Base. Extra- and intracranial surgery of skull base tumors. Edited by H Scheunemann, K Schurmann, J Halms. (Pp 256; DM148.00.) Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co, 1986.

This volume marks the deliberations at the Second International Meeting of the Skull Base Study Group. Neurosurgeons, otorhinolaryngologists, maxillofacial, plastic and reconstructive surgeons, as well as ophthalmologists and neuroradiologists, have contributed to the symposium and to this volume. Professor Schurmann in his preface has pointed out that no one specialist deals with lesions of the skull base, and it is only by a multidisciplinary approach that advances in understanding and treatment will be made. With improved imaging techniques (CT Scan and magnetic resonance imaging) and new micro-surgical techniques

as well as laser and CUSA equipment, many conditions previously believed to be inoperable have been treated successfully by a multi-disciplinary surgical team. In concept a skull base study group is most attractive; their first meeting was in 1973. This report is of the meeting in Mainz 1984.

The book is divided into sections: (1) Anatomy and neuroradiology of the skull base, (2) Anterior skull base tumours, (3) Middle and posterior skull base tumours.

One has the impression that the actual symposium must have been a most profitable occasion for all those involved. Sadly, the book will provide little new information for those who would wish to benefit from the combined deliberations at the symposium. Many of the "chapters" are less than 1,000 words, and do not really tell the reader how to perform the operation (doubtless this was explained in great detail during the symposium). There are a few chapters, however, which stand out above the mists of mediocrity. The anatomical chapter "Topographical anatomy of the skull base and adjacent tissues" is in the usual exquisite detail which we have come to expect from Lang's writings. The contribution by Sekhar and Samii on "Petriocliaval and medial tentorial meningiomas" is useful. Individual case reports, unless they provide a major technical lesson, do not contribute to this volume. Three hundred words describing a fairly straightforward case of bi-frontal meningioma or five hundred words describing surgical reconstruction of the eustachian tube or blindness caused by Schwannoma of the olfactory nerve do not contribute materially to the book. The preface implies a wide international contribution to the Society; in fact 33 of the 56 contributors are German, with strong supporting roles by Dutch and French.

In summary, I am sure that the International Study Group is the way forward in understanding and treatment of the diseases of the skull base. Unfortunately, I do not believe that this volume lives up to the promise in the preface.

H ALAN CROCKARD

Progress in Neuropathology Vol 6. Edited by Harry M Zimmerman. (Pp 304; \$98.50.) New York: Raven Press, 1986.

Given that the stated aim of this sixth and latest volume in the progress in neuropathology series is the presentation of new

concepts and information in neuropathology, there should be ample excitations for even the most jaded of pathologists. Unfortunately the result is far duller than one might have expected. It is not the assembled authorship, who have ample claims to distinction. Rather it is the choice of subjects which disappoints.

Once again we are presented with the neuropathology of Parkinson-dementia complex of Guam, now rapidly dwindling incidence, the immunology of EAE, the immunocytochemistry of neurofibrillary tangles, and glioma tissue culture. Many of the detailed and meticulously referenced accounts would sit more comfortably in standard textbooks than in a volume of recent advances. Lost opportunities abound: advances in the morphometry and neurochemistry of Alzheimer's disease, neurotransmitter research, the fast expanding peroxisomal diseases, and the increasing influence of neuro-imaging techniques and gene probes which will profoundly alter the practice of neuropathology, to name but a few.

There are of course some bright spots: exciting and thought provoking essays on glucocorticoids and their role in the pathogenesis of hippocampal lesions, the influence of cytoplasmic microtubules in cell proliferation, and an essay on tumour invasion and metastasis. There is also a timely critique of the so-called neuron-specific enolase now found widely in extra-CNS tissues, a warning to us all in this age of immunocytochemistry.

The muscle chapters are particularly disappointing. Congenital myopathies take the form of a catalogue, including some excessive rarities, yet ignoring entirely the important and burgeoning subject of mitochondrial cytopathy. Previously unpublished, and (as it turns out) non-specific, muscle changes in fatal catatonias provide the coda to this book.

All in all, I doubt whether the individual purchaser will be attracted by the relatively high price and poor prose style. Literature seekers may request it from libraries, but I doubt whether they will be encouraged to stray far from their original objective.

B N HARDING

Emotions — Neuronal and Chemical Control. Edited by Y. Oomura. (Pp 446; £105.10.) Basel: S Karger AG, 1986.

Occasionally, genuine surprise accompanies