stealing from the rich and giving to the poor and the "lusty leg" syndrome of *tabes dorsalis* which is a classic of descriptive and aetiological economy. Unfortunately this "Pocket Book of Clinical Neurology" cannot be recommended.

ALASTAIR COMPSTON

Plasmapheresis and the Immunobiology of Myasthenia Gravis by Peter C Dau (pp xviii + 371; £29.95) Boston: Houghton Mifflin Professional Publishers, 1979.

It is extraordinary how previously rejected observations become "respectable" when the theoretical basis becomes orthodox. In the 1960s the autoimmune hypotheses for myasthenia gravis were rejected by authors of reviews other than their progenitors, and experimentalists confidently stated that antibodies against acetylcholine receptors did not exist. Accordingly, there were still many who would not accept the clinical evidence favouring early thymectomy, and treatment with azathioprine was discounted outside of Europe. Now that the immunological basis of myasthenia gravis is well established, the value of early thymectomy is universally acknowledged, azathioprine has an established place in treatment, and plasma exchange has become an ethical form of treatment. The exact value of plasmapheresis and its indications remain somewhat uncertain. Is it effective alone or only with follow-up immunosuppression? Is removal of antibody the essential element or is replacement with donor IgG important? There are many factors still to be agreed and symposia on myasthenia gravis are now taking place all over the world. This book is the proceedings of one of these held in San Francisco in June 1978. Like every symposium, it is a mixture of the good and the not so good. Part I, on the immunology of the acetylcholine receptor, is an excellent survey with little new information. It is a good starting point for readers who have not followed the subject as it has developed. Part 2, on thymic pathology, thymectomy, and thoracic duct drainage, is more disappointing but the chapter by GD Levine on the structure and pathology of the thymus

(indicating that germinal centres are extra-thymic structures) is most interesting. The main sections are Part 3 (plasmapheresis) and Part 4 (immunosuppressive drug therapy). These sections are, unfortunately, based on small series. In this respect the Symposium was a little premature. The papers will add little to those of the pioneer London and Wurzburg workers, but at least the differences in procedures allow some questions to be formulated, such as the role of replacement media in plasmapheresis, and the site of action of azathioprine.

At its price the book will appeal more to researchers than to clinicians looking for guidance on the treatment of the occasional case of myasthenia gravis, but the former will read it with the closest attention. Well produced and edited, it is a landmark in the literature on myasthenia gravis.

JA SIMPSON

Aromatic Amino Acid Hydroxylases and Mental Disease Edited by MBH Youdim (pp 390; £23) Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 1979.

The aromatic amino acid hydroxylases are enzymes of major neurochemical and pathological importance. Defective synthesis of phenylalanine hydroxylase in phenylketonuria leads to the accumulation of phenylalanine and its metabolites and thus to the resultant mental deficit. Tyrosine and tryptophan hydroxylases are the rate limiting enzymes for the synthesis of the catecholamines and 5-hydroxytryptamine, and the subject of intense interest in relation to affective diseases. Three chapters in this book concern phenylketonuria and affective illness. However, a second group of chapters on the enzymological properties of hydroxylases is probably the most original part of the book and renders it an essential part of a neurochemical library. It is attractively produced and efficiently indexed with comprehensive reference lists covering the literature up to around 1976.

G CURZON

Aphasia and Associated Disorders by Andrew Kertesz (pp 350; \$32.50) New York: Grune and Stratton, 1979.

The extent of the personal and social impact on acquired disorders of language has clearly been reflected in the large number of books published on the subject of aphasia. In this volume Dr Kertesz attempts to bring together information on the classification of aphasic disorders, the ways of testing aphasic patients and also on the problems associated with treatment and rehabilitation. He states in the preface that one of the aims of the book is "to present new data with a novel approach and technique." What this in fact means is that more than one third of the book has been devoted to the analysis of aphasia using the Western Aphasia Battery. He outlines in one chapter the rationale of the test and this is followed by chapters dealing with its standardisation and validation and the application of a numerical taxonomy to the classification of aphasic groups and also to alexia, agraphia and apraxia. In one chapter the author provides a descriptive summary of the major aphasia examinations in English. He also deals with the current techniques used in localising lesions and devotes two chapters to the problem of recovery and treatment. The book emphasises heavily the practical aspects (that is assessment, rehabilitation and treatment) of aphasic problems and for this reason will have a limited appeal to the clinician.

M WYKE

Notice

The Fifth International Congress on Neuromuscular Diseases will be held in Marseille, France, 12-17 September 1982.

Further information is obtainable from The Secretariat, 5th International Congress on Neuromuscular Diseases, c/o Pr Georges Serratrice, CHU La Timone, 1 Chemin de l'Armée d'Afrique, 13385 Marseille cedex 4, France.