staining 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 recom-
manded.

ALASTAIR COMPSTON

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

It is extraordinary how previously re-
jected observations become “respect-
able” 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 immunologi-
cal basis of myasthenia gravis is well
established, the value of early thymec-
tomy 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 un-
certain. Is it effective alone or only
with follow-up immunosuppression? Is
removal of antibody the essential ele-
ment 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 acetylcho-
line 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 path-
ology, thymectomy, and thoracic duct
drainage, is more disappointing but the
chapter by GD Levine on the struc-
ture and pathology of the thymus
(indicating that germinal centres are
extra-thymic structures) is most in-
teresting. The main sections are Part
3 (plasmapheresis) and Part 4 (im-
unosuppressive drug therapy). These
sections are, unfortunately, based on
small series. In this respect the Sym-
posium was a little premature. The
papers will add little to those of the
pioneer London and Würzburg
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 pro-
duced 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:
The aromatic amino acid hydroxylases
are enzymes of major neurochemical
and pathological importance. Defective
synthesis of phenylalanine hydroxylase
in phenylketonuria leads to the accu-
mulation 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 cate-
cholamines and 5-hydroxytryptamine,
and the subject of intense interest in
relation to affective diseases. Three
chapters in this book concern phenyl-
ketonuria and affective illness. How-
ever, a second group of chapters on
the enzymological properties of hydroxy-
lases 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.

M WYKE

Aphasia and Associated Disorders
by Andrew Kertesz (pp 350; $32.50) New
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 classifica-
tion 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 apha-
sic 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 tech-
niques 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.

G CURZON

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 Con-
gress on Neuromuscular Diseases, c/o
Pr Georges Serratrice, CHU La Timone,
1 Chemin de l’Armée d’Afrique, 13385
Marseille cedex 4, France.