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Preface

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The calibre of a journal reflects the efforts of its Editorial staff, so the continued success of the *Journal of Neurology, Neurosurgery and Psychiatry*, affectionately known as the "Green Rag", over the past decade stands as a tribute to its Editor, John Simpson. John has now retired as Editor, and those concerned with the Journal, particularly Steven Lock, Editor of the *British Medical Journal*, felt that this occasion should provide some other mark of respect and thanks. For this reason, the current volume of the Journal is dedicated to John Simpson.

A Festschrift may take many forms. For instance, friends, colleagues and students may be invited to contribute their literary skills to a presentation volume. In the case of John Simpson, however, a different format was obvious. His retirement coincides with the maturing of a scientific concept that he originally proposed two decades ago, namely the auto-immune basis for myasthenia gravis. John Simpson's contributions to scientific neurology have spanned many fields, but those concerning myasthenia initiated and sustained many of the exciting discoveries that have emerged in recent years concerning this illness. It was only natural to devote this volume of the Journal, dedicated to John Simpson, to the subject of myasthenia as a tribute not only to his period as Editor, but also to his outstanding contributions to this field of neurology. Having decided that this should be the format of the volume, I asked another expert in the field, John Newsom Davis, to select a group of international authorities and invite them to contribute an essay on their work to mark the occasion. I am delighted to say that every one of these individuals accepted immediately to provide what I hope is an authoritative text on the current state of our understanding of myasthenia gravis.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank John Newsom Davis and each contributor for the time that they have spent, and also Kenneth Till and Susie Stewart for their help in the preparation of the volume.

C D MARSDEN