VOLUME TWO

MEDICAL PHYSIOLOGY

FOURTEENTH EDITION

Edited by

VERNON B. MOUNTCASTLE, M.D.

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with 1668 illustrations

The C. V. Mosby Company

ST. LOUIS • TORONTO • LONDON 1980

FOURTEENTH EDITION

Previous editions copyrighted 1918, 1919, 1920, 1922, 1926, 1930, 1935, 1938, 1941, 1956, 1961, 1968, 1974

Printed in the United States of America

The C. V. Mosby Company
11830 Westline Industrial Drive, St. Louis, Missouri 63141

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Mountcastle, Vernon B
Medical physiology.

Bibliography: p.
Includes index.
1. Human physiology. I. Title.
QP34.5.M76 1980 612 79-25943
ISBN 0-8016-3560-8

GW/VH/VH 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 01/B/006

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Preface

TO FOURTEENTH EDITION

The general principles by which this textbook is organized remain those described in the preface to its twelfth edition, namely, to present mammalian physiology as an independent biologic discipline as well as a basic medical science. Two new sections appear in this edition, the first on the principles of system theory as applied to physiology and the second on the physiology of development and aging. Sixty-five chapters of the present edition either are wholly new (ten) or have been extensively revised (fifty-five); twelve chapters remain essentially as they appeared in the thirteenth edition.

This edition has been written by forty-five authors, of whom twelve have joined this effort for the first time. Forty-one of these writers are continually engaged in research and teaching in physiology. Each has taken time from that dedicated life to summarize here the present state of knowledge in a particular field of interest. Whatever value this book possesses is wholly due to the contributors' depth of understanding, skill of exposition, and devotion to the task. For this I am indebted to each.

For them and for myself I wish to thank those authors and publishers who have allowed us to reproduce illustrations previously published elsewhere.

Vernon B. Mountcastle

Preface

TO TWELFTH EDITION

The twelfth edition of *Medical Physiology* presents a cross section of knowledge of the physiologic sciences, as viewed by a group of thirty-one individuals, twenty-three of whom are actively engaged in physiologic research and teaching. Each section of the book provides statements of the central core of information in a particular field of physiology, reflecting, by virtue of the daily occupations of its authors, the questioning and explorative attitude of the investigator and indeed some of the excitement of the search. These statements vary along a continuum from those with a high probability for continuing certainty to those that are speculative but, it is hoped, of heuristic value. An attempt has been made to maintain a balanced point of view. I hope this book will convey to the student who reads it the fact that physiology is a living and changing science, continuously perfecting its basic propositions and laws in the light of new discoveries that permit new conceptual advances. The student should retain for himself a questioning attitude toward all, for commonly the most important advances are made when young investigators doubt those statements others have come to regard as absolutely true. This is not a book that sets forth in stately order a series of facts which, if learned, will be considered adequate for success in a course in physiology. Many such "facts" are likely to be obsolete before the student of physiology reaches the research laboratory, or the student of medicine the bedside. Nor is it a book that provides ready-made correlations and integrations of the various fields of physiology necessary for a comprehensive understanding of bodily function. Those integrations are an essential part of scholarly endeavor not readily gained from books alone. It is my hope, however, that study of this book, combined with laboratory experience and scholarly reflection, will provide the student with a method and an attitude that will serve him long after the concepts presented here are replaced by new and more cogent ones.

The title *Medical Physiology* has been retained, for one of the purposes of this edition, in common with earlier ones, is "to present that part of physiology which is of special concern to the medical student, the practitioner of medicine, and the medical scientist in terms of the experimental inquiries that have led to our present state of knowledge." The scope of the book was and is still broader, however, and attempts to present mammalian physiology as an independent biologic discipline as well as a basic medical science. Mammalian physiology has its base in cellular physiology and biophysics, and it is from this point of view that many of the subjects treated here are approached. Above all, mammalian physiology must deal with problems of the interactions between large populations of cells, organs, and organ systems and, finally, the integrated function of an entire animal. Physiology thus must bridge the distance from cellular biology on the one hand to systems analysis and control theory on the other: each is important and any one is incomplete without the others. This approach to the problems of internal homeostasis, of reaction to the environment, and of action upon the environment is evidenced in several sections of this book.

Of the eighty chapters composing this book, twenty-nine are wholly new in this edition; forty-five from the last edition have been extensively revised either by their original authors or by new ones. Six have been allowed to stand substantially as previously written, for these seemed to comprise as balanced and modern a survey as any presently possible. The names and affiliations of my colleagues in this effort have been

listed. They have taken time from busy lives to survey their fields of interest; for this I am greatly indebted to each. If this book possesses any worth it is in large part due to their continuing devotion to the task of its preparation.

For them and for myself I wish to thank those authors and publishers who have allowed us to reproduce illustrations previously published elsewhere.

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