

TEXTBOOK OF The Nervous System

A Foundation for Clinical Neurology

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With an Introduction by WILDER PENFIELD, M.D.

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The Nervous System

To innumerable friendly critics, both students and personnel, whose interest has sustained and guided my efforts, but above all to

DR. A. M. LASSEK
DR. J. C. B. GRANT
DR. A. W. HAM
DR. G. MCL. WILSON
this book is gratefully dedicated.

Introduction

Neuro-anatomy is a complicated and difficult subject for the beginner, but he will find in it a rich reward for his labor. It is the basic science to which clinicians must continually return for explanation of the mechanisms of health and disease and for clues to the solution of new problems.

This textbook is so constructed that the completely uninitiated student can read its opening chapters without bewilderment and master its final descriptions without confusion. The ground is covered twice. In Part One, the descriptions are brief and simple so that the beginner may gain an integrated conception of the whole subject with a minimum of detail. In Part Two this conception is fully elaborated.

Throughout the text, the reader will find references to the functions of structures and to the disabilities that must of necessity be associated with injury to those structures. Thus, it is truly a functional neuro-anatomy. It provides the curious student with adequate references for collateral reading, while to the instructor it offers guidance in the study of original writings.

Increasing knowledge of certain neurone systems enables the neuro-anatomist of today to link description of structure with discussion of purpose. But there remain many mechanisms that are obscure, and the teacher does well to make frank statement of doubts and of theories so that the student himself may begin to weigh the evidence, sharing with us the privilege of honest doubt, and even indulging in the joys of minor investigation.

The nervous system is alive in a peculiar sense, for its ultimate units, the ganglion cells, have the capacity of positive discharge. When impulses are conducted to them they are capable of actively contributing energy to the further propagation of the impulse until the goal, whatever it may be, is reached. The patterns of neurone connection, the means of insulation, of inhibition, and perhaps of initiation of the nervous impulses, all these are problems to the functional neuro-anatomist.

A scientist may be classified according to what he is curious about, if he is a scientist. A medical student, of course, must be fired with curiosity about the structure and function of the human body, if he is a student. But he should realize that truth and further insight are to be sought in the dissecting room or under the microscope or in the physiological laboratory. Final authority in the field of medicine lies, not in the printed word, but in the living body.

For my own part, I have learned that a neurosurgeon must always be a student of neuro-anatomy. But I have played no part in the preparation of this volume and so I can neither claim any credit for its many virtues nor accept responsibility for its opinions. However, I share the author's conviction that with description must go an understanding of the meaning and the purposes of things. Knowledge to which has been added understanding has life in it. The seeds of growth are in it.

WILDER PENFIELD

Preface to the Second Edition

This edition differs from the first in features recommended by the author's own teaching experience, by other teachers, and by what is, after all, the final court of appeal, the students themselves.

The major alteration has been in the Atlas: The number of sections shown has been more than trebled. They now include. besides a greatly increased series of crosssections, sagittal and coronal cuts; these are deservedly popular with students and they undoubtedly tie details together in a way otherwise impossible. Coronal sections are especially useful but peculiarly difficult to obtain; as far as the author knows, they appear elsewhere only in Riley's exhaustive reference Atlas. Certain plates, notably XXXIV to XLII are cut somewhat obliquely from side to side; thus their two sides might well qualify as separate crosssectional levels, further enlarging the series.

In addition, some of the old plates and keys which failed to measure up to the standard of the new material, have been replaced.

The method of photograph-and-key has been retained. We feel it superior to any other. The best drawing does indeed show relations clearly but it is still an idealization and is therefore an unreliable guide in dealing with slides. On the other hand, a photograph alone, while realistic, is almost as formidable a subject of study as the slide itself and is not easy to label clearly. We have tried to have the best of things both ways, and to break the gap between pure diagram and actual material by not one but two carefully selected and prepared steps—key and photograph.

A running commentary on Plates XVII to L has been added. As far as possible, this has been made progressive, stressing development of features from one level to the

next. It is calculated to provide a thorough practical review if read consecutively, as well as to facilitate and illuminate incidental reference.

Finally, with regard to the Atlas, several hundred cross-references have been provided, from Atlas to text and text illustrations, from the latter to the Atlas, and from one part of the Atlas to another, thus integrating the various departments of the book. These references have not been made where correlation is obvious, but have been placed at points where, perhaps, a gentle reminder may not be amiss that other resources are available in dealing with difficult problems.

An attempt has been made to bring the book abreast of current literature in significant points. An assimilation of the enormous flood of communications is, of course, impossible, but we have adhered to the principle that this is primarily a textbook for students, not a reference work for the specialist; hence, only those findings have been added that are explicit and of direct medical interest; and from these, a further elimination has been made to leave only those that are most definitive, readily available, and interesting to the student.

Chapter 9 has been rewritten, considerably expanded, and more fully illustrated, to summarize this enormous field more satisfactorily. The reticular formation has been given consecutive treatment at the end of Chapter 17. Certain new developments in the study of cortex have been reviewed at the end of Chapter 19.

On repeated student request, the table of contents has been expanded to include section headings, for convenient reference,

Besides new additions mentioned above, a number of text figures have been redrawn entirely in the light of teaching experience. Figure 82, the dermatomes, has been revised in accordance with the work of Drs. J. J. Keegan and F. D. Garrett; and the author wishes to acknowledge the generous expenditure of time devoted by Dr. Keegan to assuring the authenticity of this feature.

His appreciation also goes to the following: To this college and department for the unstinted time and facilities allowed him for the work; to his colleagues, and particularly to Dr. John S. Latta and Dr. Edward Holyoke, for careful inspection of the new material and many valued suggestions; to Mrs. C. E. Evans, not only for skilful and patient work on the interminable revisions of figures and keys, but

for alert detection of many shortcomings; to Dr. James Papez for permission to use so many of his magnificent series of brainstem photographs; to Dr. A. W. Ham for permission to use a number of unique figures from his textbook of histology; to Mr. Wm. Wiltse for his undaunted and ingenious efforts which resulted in a number of the most valuable Atlas plates; to J. B. Lippincott Company and particularly to Mr. Walter Kahoe, for their confidence in the future of this book and the generously free hand they have given with this revision; and to Mr. Brooks Stewart of Lippincott's for the thought and detailed care he has taken in editing the work.

H. C. E.

Preface to the First Edition

The study of the nervous system ought to be one of the most interesting subjects in the medical curriculum, for it borders on several vital fields of human interest. Yet, if the reactions of many students and practitioners and my own student and graduate experience are any indication, it seems particularly hard to grasp and easy to forget.

I have long wondered why this should be so, and have given much regretful thought to the matter. In the course of my teaching, I discovered a few devices that have proved useful to students but found no fundamental solution to the problem. Finally, however, the idea struck me that perhaps the fault lay in the conventional approach. Perhaps the traditional presentation, chiefly concerned as it is with mere structure, is now outgrown. In the past this was the only approach available to neurologists, but with the accumulation of new knowledge, particularly the advances in neurology of the past quarter-century, other methods have become possible and should, perhaps, be worked out in practice.

I have attempted in this book to present the subject of neuro-anatomy and neurophysiology in a way suggested by the psychology of learning. With this aim in view I have departed from convention in three important ways.

Psychology teaches us that the most effective learning is through the formation of a mental outline, which is then filled in and elaborated much as an artist first sketches and then fills in a drawing. Now in such subjects as anatomy and physiology, an outline exists in the student's mind even before he begins his study; he already has a rough working knowledge of the body, its organs and their functions. This knowledge has been gained for the most part unheedingly, through general experience, but it is firmly

fixed in the mind and forms a sturdy scaffolding for further study. In neurology, on the contrary, there is usually no such framework of common knowledge on which to build: what the average beginner knows about the brain can be written in a few lines. To the student the subject is an uncharted jungle of facts. This book attempts to meet the difficulty by covering the ground twice. Part One surveys the whole subject as briefly and simply as possible; it aims to present a concise outline (comparable with the beginner's common knowledge of gross anatomy) emphasizing general principles and basic facts yet brief enough to be grasped as a whole. In Part Two the outline is filled out with the useful, detailed information the student should have. In such a condensed account as is given in Part One many statements must, of course, be made in a rough or approximate form; for example, the vestibule is described as the organ of "equilibration," and only the major components of the cranial nerves are given. The rule followed was to offer convenient short cuts, yet to make sure that these will not be misleading or confusing. Part Two gives a more completely accurate, technical account.

At the same time, if the story is to be consecutive as well as compact, a certain amount of nonobjective comment is almost unavoidable; this, however, has always been emphatically labelled as such and based on sound authority.

The first outline of a subject, psychology tells us, if it is to fulfill its purpose, must be a bold but simple sketch, not an overconscientious summary loaded with detail. In neurology this is especially true, for to all but the neurosurgeon, the brain must remain an abstraction, rarely seen, much less manipulated and known almost entirely

by its workings. It is for this reason that this book does not begin with an account of the brain as it appears in the dissecting room but, throughout Part One and preponderantly in Part Two, it uses and discusses diagrams of the brain. A detailed description of the form and cross sections of the brain is given only in the concluding chapters; these may be used as a laboratory guide and can, of course, be referred to from the beginning of the students' work. This procedure does not disregard the tradition that science must be based on observation. But successful observation requires some comprehension of what is being observed; to this end diagrams and principles are placed before photographs and dissectionin order to give the latter their full value. Nevertheless, each diagram and each principle has been chosen and arranged with a view to building a practical dissector's and surgeon's grasp of the subject.

According to modern psychology, association is a vital factor in learning. If a subject is to be fully assimilated and confidently applied, association between its details must be close and accurate. Yet our study of the nervous system is dispersed among neuroanatomy, neurophysiology, neuropathology, psychiatry and a smattering of psychology. Some of this division is necessary and desirable but some of it is not, especially the division between structure and function. Such cleavage was long made necessary by the labor of exploration, which was divided between different departments, and by the lack of enough knowledge to form a rounded picture. But increase in knowledge has made it merely a hardship, particularly in a subject in which functions are not known in advance and in which structure does not suggest function to the uninitiated. Moreover, the size of the nervous system, as compared with the rest of the body, does not make the division a practical necessity, as it is in general anatomy and physiology. This is not to suggest that the nervous system should be taken from the physiologist and

handed over to the anatomist, or vice versa; the physiologist does not wish to deal with the actions of individual muscles but with muscular contraction in general and the same distinction may surely be made between individual nerve tracts and nervous conduction in general. Accordingly, this book has tried to disregard traditional boundaries and to associate what can profitably be associated, as fully and thoroughly as possible. It attempts to explain structure by function rather than to describe structure and refer in passing, to purpose and reason. It makes free use of neuropathology whenever this is illustrative or illuminating but does not pretend to do more than touch on this field. It even draws here and there on psychology: Pavlov's work, for example, is based on as strict a discipline as any of the older sciences, and if such work contributes to a rounded picture of our subject, it would certainly be unscientific not to take full advantage of it.

The illustrations with their legends have been designed and arranged to form in themselves a consecutive narrative. By running through them the student should be able to refresh his memory quickly on the most important points in the book. To achieve continuity I have included a few items that might otherwise seem superfluous.

Originality can hardly be claimed for a developmental order of presentation as such. But this order does avoid descriptive treatment by regions, which entails learning masses of detail that are almost without significance until the final fitting together, and it equally avoids an approach through functional systems, wherein long pathways. such as the pyramidal, must be related to dimly understood regions of the brain. A presentation that begins with simple basic structures and adds the more complex is obviously attractive but when it is attempted it always involves much academic embryology and comparative anatomy that are of little practical use to the busy student. This book attempts to make a de-

velopmental presentation by means of a diagram-though with free reference to the embryo or lower animals when this appears to be truly useful. The result is entirely logical, at least, and in practice the method has proved illuminating to many students. This diagram or model, the "basic brain" sets the keynote of the earlier chapters and serves as a framework within which a more realistic picture is progressively built up. In this way the nervous system is presented as a whole almost from the start: tracts and systems are not disjointed but are related to standard, important landmarks throughout their extent and many otherwise puzzling relationships are simply explained. Hence the basic brain and the order or presentation that it makes practicable are submitted as something original.

Discussion of living research may seem to offend against economy; but it is to make room for just such material that I have saved space elsewhere. For by this means the student is most strongly made aware that he is entering on a living, growing adventure in knowledge and power, to which he himself may contribute, rather than collecting neatly packaged (but not always conclusive) facts to be peddled later on to the public. Certainly, experience with this book and the advice of my colleagues

will suggest many improvements, both in further eliminations and in restoration of what may prove to have been too drastically cut down. This is the sort of matter in which individual judgment is most fallible.

So much for major innovations and policies. Among the minor devices employed in this book, the following may be mentioned: A careful attempt is made to present the subject in such order that it can readily be correlated with laboratory work. The text presents progressive diagrams, as well as the "basic brain," which are built up as new features are encountered in the work: among these is a simplified form of the "exploded diagram." An attempt is made to derive the sensory systems from a common pattern and to vitalize technical words by showing their derivation from their roots (which, for some reason, seems to be unpopular with instructors and popular with students). Commentary on involved points of nomenclature is given. The concept of the four sensory correlation centers is discussed and, naturally, many analogies, illustrative examples and comments, such as any instructor will have found by experience to be useful have been included

H. C. E.

Contents

Part One THE NERVOUS SYSTEM IN OUTLINE

1. Neurology and the Medical Student		ıĕ			,	Ph.	3
A Definition of Neurology							3
Place of Neurology in Medicine					Ċ	Ċ	3
A Medical Approach to Neurology							5
Summary							7
2. Origin and Function of Nerve Cells	(8)	(4)				(40)	8
The Meaning of Response							8
Response in Single Cells			v				8
Response in Simple, Many-Celled Animals					e g		9
Form of the Nerve Cell	ě						11
Neuron Networks and Integration of the Body		(5)					12
The Synapse		141					13
Summation			4.7			*	15
Inhibition	-		ě				16
Central Excitatory State or C.E.S.	٠	*	ě				18
Reflex Arcs and Reflex Responses	141						19
Summary	:*:		×	*		-	21
3. The Ground Plan of the Central Nervous System							22
			*	•		(*)	22
Centralization of the Nervous System	*	3	£	*)			22
The Neural Tube		Ŷ.	7	•	(*)	(*)	22
Terms of Position in the Neural Tube	4.			×	:#3	360	23
Gray and White Matter	ac	*		×	×		26
Sensory and Motor Regions		X	3			*	29
The Visceral Nervous System	*	3	×	÷		(*)	31
Segments of the Nervous System	ě	*		æ		**	33
Pathways in the Segmental Nervous System				7.0	141		33
Possibilities of a Segmental Nervous System				*	91	×	34
Summary	٠	*	٠	٠			35
4. Development of the Ground Plan		÷					36
Developments in the Spinal Cord							36
Developments in the Head Region, Brain, Encephalization	*						37
		*			197		01

	0 1 1
XVI	Contents

	The Ventricles, Landmarks of the Brain		141		×		100	36			38
	Cranial Nerves in General		141	v	4			(4)			39
	The Five Columns of Nuclei		8		y.			141	4		41
	Composition of the Cranial Nerves		ar.		4				91	4.	44
	Summary								v		46
F C	Typ Chycony Cycm										48
5. 501	Prasegmental Structures. I. The Sensory Syste	LIVI		(8)	٠		*			*	40
	Four Special Senses										48
	Correlation Centers		¥		4			12	161	4	48
	The Basic Brain										49
	Total Correlation; The Thalamus							,			50
	Struggle for Dominance Between Sensory Center										51
	Total Correlation; The Cerebral Cortex										54
	Conditioned Reflexes										54
	Structure of the Cerebral Cortex							÷			56
	Sensory Pathways; Common Characteristics										57
	Sensory Pathways; Feeling										58
											59
			×							14	
							Ä	nië.	8		60
	The Sense of Sight		÷		(4)		ž	*	×		62
	The Sense of Smell		ř		*					*	64
	Pathways to the Cerebellum	•						1	4	*	65
	Summary	×	*			*		1	٠	*	66
6. Su	PRASEGMENTAL STRUCTURES. II. THE MOTOR SYSTEM	M			4						68
	Levels of Motor Control										60
	Levels of Motor Control					9	91		w		68
											-
	The Lower Motor Neuron				*	*			÷		68
	The Lower Motor Neuron Spinal Reflexes	*.			*	×		*			68 69
	The Lower Motor Neuron Spinal Reflexes Vestibular and Other Higher Reflexes	*.	*					x x x x	1		68 69 73
	The Lower Motor Neuron Spinal Reflexes Vestibular and Other Higher Reflexes The Reticular Formation and Red Nucleus	*.	*					* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *	14 14 14	•	68 69 73 75
	The Lower Motor Neuron Spinal Reflexes Vestibular and Other Higher Reflexes The Reticular Formation and Red Nucleus The Extrapyramidal System							* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *	* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *		68 69 73 75 76
	The Lower Motor Neuron Spinal Reflexes Vestibular and Other Higher Reflexes The Reticular Formation and Red Nucleus The Extrapyramidal System The Cerebellum							* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *	* * * * * * * * * * *		68 69 73 75
	The Lower Motor Neuron Spinal Reflexes Vestibular and Other Higher Reflexes The Reticular Formation and Red Nucleus The Extrapyramidal System The Cerebellum The Motor Cortex				* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *	· ·			* * * * * * * * *		68 69 73 75 76
	The Lower Motor Neuron Spinal Reflexes Vestibular and Other Higher Reflexes The Reticular Formation and Red Nucleus The Extrapyramidal System The Cerebellum The Motor Cortex Connections Between Cerebrum and Cerebellum			* * * * * * * * * * * * * *	***						68 69 73 75 76 78
	The Lower Motor Neuron Spinal Reflexes Vestibular and Other Higher Reflexes The Reticular Formation and Red Nucleus The Extrapyramidal System The Cerebellum The Motor Cortex Connections Between Cerebrum and Cerebellum Co-operation of the Motor Centers				* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *						68 69 73 75 76 78 78
	The Lower Motor Neuron Spinal Reflexes Vestibular and Other Higher Reflexes The Reticular Formation and Red Nucleus The Extrapyramidal System The Cerebellum The Motor Cortex Connections Between Cerebrum and Cerebellum				* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *						68 69 73 75 76 78 78 82
	The Lower Motor Neuron Spinal Reflexes Vestibular and Other Higher Reflexes The Reticular Formation and Red Nucleus The Extrapyramidal System The Cerebellum The Motor Cortex Connections Between Cerebrum and Cerebellum Co-operation of the Motor Centers				* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *						68 69 73 75 76 78 78 82 83
	The Lower Motor Neuron Spinal Reflexes Vestibular and Other Higher Reflexes The Reticular Formation and Red Nucleus The Extrapyramidal System The Cerebellum The Motor Cortex Connections Between Cerebrum and Cerebellum Co-operation of the Motor Centers Autonomic Centers; The Hypothalamus				* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *						68 69 73 75 76 78 82 83 83
7 Tu	The Lower Motor Neuron Spinal Reflexes Vestibular and Other Higher Reflexes The Reticular Formation and Red Nucleus The Extrapyramidal System The Cerebellum The Motor Cortex Connections Between Cerebrum and Cerebellum Co-operation of the Motor Centers Autonomic Centers; The Hypothalamus Summary										68 69 73 75 76 78 82 83 83 85
7. Тн	The Lower Motor Neuron Spinal Reflexes Vestibular and Other Higher Reflexes The Reticular Formation and Red Nucleus The Extrapyramidal System The Cerebellum The Motor Cortex Connections Between Cerebrum and Cerebellum Co-operation of the Motor Centers Autonomic Centers; The Hypothalamus				* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *						68 69 73 75 76 78 82 83 83
7. Тн	The Lower Motor Neuron Spinal Reflexes Vestibular and Other Higher Reflexes The Reticular Formation and Red Nucleus The Extrapyramidal System The Cerebellum The Motor Cortex Connections Between Cerebrum and Cerebellum Co-operation of the Motor Centers Autonomic Centers; The Hypothalamus Summary	BR	AIN								68 69 73 75 76 78 82 83 83 85
7. Тн	The Lower Motor Neuron Spinal Reflexes Vestibular and Other Higher Reflexes The Reticular Formation and Red Nucleus The Extrapyramidal System The Cerebellum The Motor Cortex Connections Between Cerebrum and Cerebellum Co-operation of the Motor Centers Autonomic Centers; The Hypothalamus Summary The External and Internal Form of the Human Changes in Outward Form The System of the Carebral Harrischeres	BR	AIN								68 69 73 75 76 78 82 83 83 85
7. Тн	The Lower Motor Neuron Spinal Reflexes Vestibular and Other Higher Reflexes The Reticular Formation and Red Nucleus The Extrapyramidal System The Cerebellum The Motor Cortex Connections Between Cerebrum and Cerebellum Co-operation of the Motor Centers Autonomic Centers; The Hypothalamus Summary The External and Internal Form of the Human Changes in Outward Form	BR	AIN								68 69 73 75 76 78 82 83 83 85
7. Тн	The Lower Motor Neuron Spinal Reflexes Vestibular and Other Higher Reflexes The Reticular Formation and Red Nucleus The Extrapyramidal System The Cerebellum The Motor Cortex Connections Between Cerebrum and Cerebellum Co-operation of the Motor Centers Autonomic Centers; The Hypothalamus Summary The External and Internal Form of the Human Changes in Outward Form Form of the Cerebral Hemispheres Subdivisions of the Brain	BR	AIN								68 69 73 75 76 78 82 83 83 85 86 86 90
7. Тн	The Lower Motor Neuron Spinal Reflexes Vestibular and Other Higher Reflexes The Reticular Formation and Red Nucleus The Extrapyramidal System The Cerebellum The Motor Cortex Connections Between Cerebrum and Cerebellum Co-operation of the Motor Centers Autonomic Centers; The Hypothalamus Summary The External and Internal Form of the Human Changes in Outward Form Form of the Cerebral Hemispheres Subdivisions of the Brain Cross Sections	BR.	AIN								68 69 73 75 76 78 82 83 83 85 86 86 86 90 91
7. Тн	The Lower Motor Neuron Spinal Reflexes Vestibular and Other Higher Reflexes The Reticular Formation and Red Nucleus The Extrapyramidal System The Cerebellum The Motor Cortex Connections Between Cerebrum and Cerebellum Co-operation of the Motor Centers Autonomic Centers; The Hypothalamus Summary The External and Internal Form of the Human Changes in Outward Form Form of the Cerebral Hemispheres Subdivisions of the Brain Cross Sections The Lebes of the Hamispheres	BR	AIN								68 69 73 75 76 78 82 83 83 85 86 86 90

Part Two THE NERVOUS SYSTEM IN DETAIL

8. NE	rvous Conduction	×	1		į.				99
	Conduction of Impulses								99
	The Synapse				4		141		100
9. Тн	E NEURONS								104
						-			
	The Medical Importance of Neurohistology		*			1.0		1	104
	The Neuron Theory	*	*	*	y.			-	104
	Methods of Studying the Neuron			4	195	G(105
	Nervous Tissue in Ordinary Preparations		1		*			÷	106
	Micro-Anatomy of the Neuron, General The Nissl Bodies	7	19	E					108
	TOI NI CI II		E		*				111
	Form and Variations of the Neuron	٠		17					111a
		14	10.7	4	Ť				111b
		*	•	1	ř	8			111c
	The Ependyma		*	8	Ÿ	1			111f
	Family Tree of Central Nervous Tissues	*	¥		1	Þ			111f
10. NE	RVE FIBERS AND END-ORGANS	-			*	18	•	9	112
	The Histology of Nerve Fibers								112
	Sheaths of the Fibers	20		*	7.	*	*	٠	113
	Growth, Degeneration and Regeneration of Fibers		3		,	>	*		113
	Sensory End-Organs; Classification			•				4	117
	Sensory End-Organs; Histology		1			4		8	118
	Motor End-Organs			٠		*		ıŘ	123
		1,4			•	*	7		123
11. Tm	E SPINAL CORD, OUTER AND INNER FORM			41					124
	The Medical Importance of the Cord	100	DC	30.					124
	Relations, Position, and Size of the Cord	14	161						124
	Segmentation of the Cord								126
	Internal Structure of the Cord; General Considerations		4					-	130
	Finer Structure of the Cord; Methods of Study						4		131
	Finer Structure of the Cord; Intrinsic Systems								136
12. SEN	SORY TRACTS AND MOTOR CENTERS OF THE CORD			ng r		i.e.		٠	138
	The Pain Pathway								138
	The Touch Pathway								141
	The Course of the Pain and Touch Paths in the Brain S	tem			101				143
	The Proprioceptive Pathway		ν.					5	145
	Spinocerebellar and Minor Systems					GI.		117	1/18

	0 1 1
XVIII	Contents

	The Motor Centers							*	*	3	150
	The Motor Unit and Its Activity	*		*				(P.	4.5		151
13.	THE CRANIAL NERVES	81						D.	ų,		153
	Introduction			4					*		153
	The Oculomotor Nerve, III	8			,			*			153
	The Trochlear Nerve, IV		×		a.	8	÷		130		155
	The Trigeminal Nerve, V, Sensory Component										156
	The Trigeminal Nerve, V, Motor Component .										159
	The Abducens Nerve, VI										160
	The Facial Nerve, VII, Branchial Motor Compor										161
	The Nucleus Ambiguus and the Nucleus Solitariu										163
	The Facial Nerve, VII, Other Components (New										163
	The Glossopharyngeal Nerve, IX										164
	The Vagus Nerve, X										165
	The Accessorius or Spinal Accessory Nerve, XI										166
	The Hypoglossal Nerve, XII		i.e	al .				*	(9)		167
	Central Connections of the Nuclei										168
	Special Notes on the Cranial Nerves		*	a.	¥		•				168
14.	THE AUDITORY, VESTIBULAR, AND GUSTATORY SYSTEM	AS	ų	*		·		(e)			170
	The Outer and Middle Ears									-	170
	THE TOTAL TOTAL										170
	The Auditory Pathway							D.			172
	The Vestibular Organ									i	176
	The Vestibular Nerve and Nuclei										180
	Central Vestibular Connections							-			181
	The Gustatory System							4	Я	į	182
15.	THE VISUAL SYSTEM	į.		6							185
										.51	
	The Bods and Const	•	×			*				*	185
	The Rods and Cones Other Elements of the Retina	*	24	,	ř.		>	•		*	186
	Layers of the Retina	367	*		*						188
	The Macula and Papilla				4	*	(6)	91	3	¥	189
	The Optic Nerve, Chiasma, and Tract				*	K		1	,		190
	The Lateral Geniculate Bodies	16	(6)				4	4	*		191
	The Optic Radiation and the Visual Cortex						*	14	2		194
	The Reflex Centers: Superior Colliculus and Pres						-	ii.	n ²	В	195
	The Renex Centers. Superior Contcutus and Fre	tecta	11 1	egic	111		3		18	1.0	198
16.	THE THALAMUS	3	,					į.			200
	Gross Relationships of the Thalamus	2									200
	Main Subdivisions and Organization									20	200
	The Primitive Thalamic Nuclei or Archithalamus				× ,		gii.		÷		203
	The Sensory Relay Nuclei or Paleothalamus						¥		*		204
	The Association Nuclei or Neothalamus	ě	x 8							91	205
	Functions of the Thalamus	, ii	4				ų	×		9	206

		(Contents				xix
17. The Corpus Striatum and Allied Structures				(A)	,		208
Scope of the Chapter							208
General Relationships of the Ganglia—An Analogy							20
TI V							0.1
The Paleostriatum and Its Connections							0.1
The Substantia Nigra							0.1
The Subthalamic Nucleus and Other Minor Centers							2.1
The Red Nucleus							21
General Discussion of the Basal Ganglia Peduncular Nucle							21
The Reticular Formation							2188
18. The Form of the Hemispheres	9	ě	,	į			219
The Hemispheres in General							2.1
The Rhinencephalon			*				21
Factors Modifying the Form of the Hemisphere	*	*	*			-	21
Sulci and Gyri				191			22:
The White Matter of the Hemisphere	¥		8	181	2	ē	22
The Lateral Ventricles	Ä	5		(5)	::		23
		*	: e-			×	23
9. The Cerebral Cortex	¥	*:	(e)		×	×	232
Significance of the Cortex and Progress in Its Study		100	~				232
Microscopic Structure		100			·		234
Architectonic Areas and Functional Areas	4	120					230
The Sensory and Motor Cortices				Ţ			238
The Pyramidal System	195			,			24
Further Localization in the Cortex		>		ž.	,	8	243
O. THE CEREBELLUM	ai						247
Significance of the Cerebellum						*	
		*	-	100	*		247
The Archicerebellum		×	*:	141	*	3	247
The Paleocarabellum		*	1		\times		249
The Paleocerebellum The Neocerebellum	3	£	4 3		79	х	250
mi c i i i	8	*:		(0)	×	9	253
Microscopic Structure	×		Sec.	*	ä	8	254
I and it of the Control II	*	÷	TW:	9	g	×	255
E	¥	¥	8		*	*	257
Person Lacous Size 2	š			.9		×	258
The Olivary Nucleus	×		*		×	ē	259
1. The Autonomic System	*	150				19	261
Definition and Functions							261
Main Subdivisions and Their Significance	et m				21	26	262
General Principles of Structure	30			ŕ			264
Pathways of Type I, Abdominal and Pelvic Viscera, Etc.	4	*	*	K			266

	<u> </u>	
XX	Cont	ents

	Pathy	vays	of '	Гур	e II	, Tl	hora	acic	ano	l Cı	ania	al V	isce	ra, I	Etc			÷	ě	*		١,	267
	Viscei												,										271
22. H	IGHER C	ENT	ERS	Ini	LU	ENC	ING	ТН	ΕА	UTO)NOI	MIC	NEI	RVOU	JS :	Sys	ГЕМ			*			275
	Signif	ican	ce o	of th	ne I	Ivo	oth	alan	nus						į,								275
	Relati																						275
	Struct	ure																					276
	Conne	ectio	ns																				281
	Funct	ions	and	d P	ath	olog	V		1							9			-				282
	Auton																			9	9	2	283
	Relati	on o	of A	uto	non	nic t	o S	oma	atic	Sys	tem			181		,	7.	•					285
23. Ti	ie Cove																				v		286
																							•
	Signif					-																	286
	The S												10									4	286
	The I																					8	287
	The I												ň										290
	Relati												onir										291 293
	The (293
	THE (EIC	DIUS	рш	ai i	1010	1			(8)		×	14.			î		*	*	4	*	8	294
24. Ti	ie Circu	JLAT	ION	OF	тн	е С	EN	TRA	L N	ERV	OUS	Sy	STE	M	9			*:		¥	,		297
	Signif	can	re a	nd	Tec	hnic	2																297
	Arteri																				•	•	297
	Relati	on o	of th	ne A	rte	ries	to	the	Ne	rvo	ns T	issi	ies		361					•		*	301
	The V																						303
	Circul					oina	LC	ord													٠		305
													100	*			,		,				505
Appen	DIX I	*	÷		v	÷	÷	,	×	¥		,	*										307
Appen	DIX II	*			÷	1	kı					*				٠					¥		309
Вівціо	GRAPHY			1		u			Y														310
Atlas				4				*	*			*						1					327
Index			•				·																425