

Posterior Surface.—The posterior surface of the vertebral column presents in the median line the spinous processes. In the cervical region (with the exception of the second and seventh vertebræ) these are short and horizontal, with bifid extremities. In the upper part of the thoracic region they are directed obliquely downward; in the middle they are almost vertical, and in the lower part they are nearly horizontal. In the lumbar region they are nearly horizontal. The spinous processes are separated by considerable intervals in the lumbar region, by narrower intervals in the neck, and are closely approximated in the middle of the thoracic region. Occasionally one of these processes deviates a little from the median line—a fact to be remembered in practice, as irregularities of this sort are attendant also on fractures or displacements of the vertebral column. On either side of the spinous processes is the **vertebral groove** formed by the laminae in the cervical and lumbar regions, where it is shallow, and by the laminae and transverse processes in the thoracic region, where it is deep and broad; these grooves lodge the deep muscles of the back. Lateral to the vertebral grooves are the articular processes, and still more laterally the transverse processes. In the thoracic region, the transverse processes stand backward, on a plane considerably behind that of the same processes in the cervical and lumbar regions. In the cervical region, the transverse processes are placed in front of the articular processes, lateral to the pedicles and between the intervertebral foramina. In the thoracic region they are posterior to the pedicles, intervertebral foramina, and articular processes. In the lumbar region they are in front of the articular processes, but behind the intervertebral foramina.

Lateral Surfaces.—The lateral surfaces are separated from the posterior surface by the articular processes in the cervical and lumbar regions, and by the transverse processes in the thoracic region. They present, in front, the sides of the bodies of the vertebræ, marked in the thoracic region by the facets for articulation with the heads of the ribs. More posteriorly are the intervertebral foramina, formed by the juxtaposition of the vertebral notches, oval in

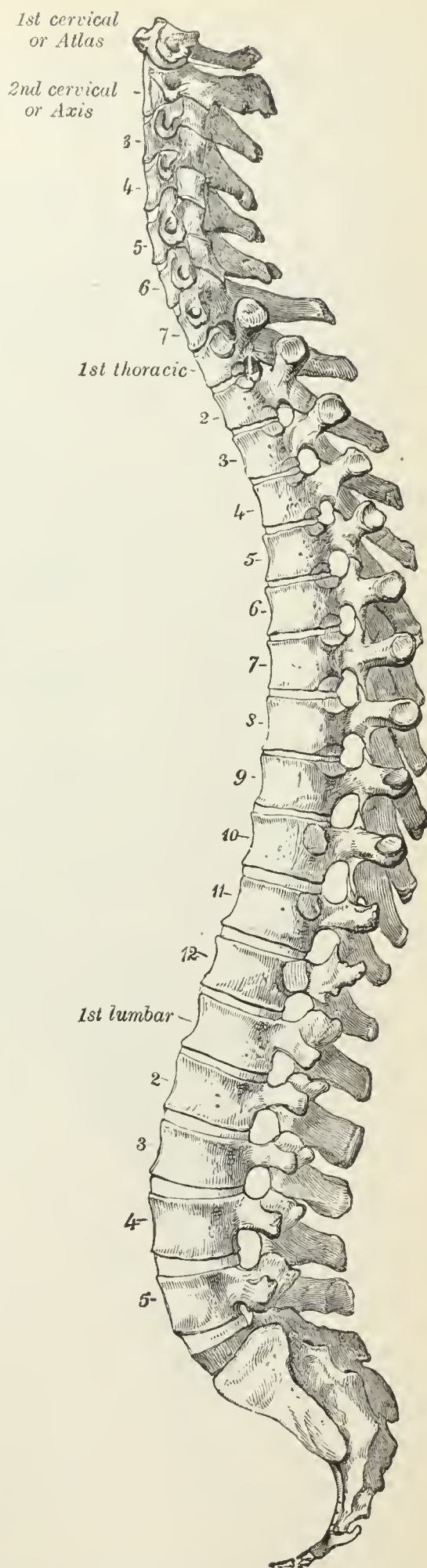


FIG. 111.—Lateral view of the vertebral column.