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ANNUS MEDICUS, 1878.

In the last half-century of the years we number backwards from that one of grace whose remote descendant, 1878, has just been gathered to his fathers, the immortal Virgil wrote:—

“Redit labor actus in orbem,

Atque in se sua per vestigia volvitur annus.”

But, the gods be praised, this is not true of the history of science in this nineteenth century, and each *annus medicus* has features and accomplishments all its own, which stamp its individuality, while the sole family likeness and evidence of germanity amongst them all is the bright star of progress which glitters on the brow of each. “*Truditur dies die, novaque pergunt interire lunæ,*” said Virgil’s fellow-countryman and coeval bard, the quick-witted Horace, and this remark is even truer of our day than his, for now so many things demand accomplishment in the short space of a diurnal revolution, and it is expected of each day to bring forth so much, that time can scarcely be afforded for the registration of what is past. In accordance with our usual custom, we purpose here, upon the threshold of the in-coming year, to review, as summarily and rapidly as possible, the items of our indebtedness to the year that is dead. We shall “a round, unvarnished tale deliver,” premising that the exigencies of space compel us to confine ourselves to a bare record of the facts, dispensing with all ornate embellishment and any effort at presenting them in a pleasing or attractive form, thus seeking, as is the object of this journal, “rather use than fame.” A convenient starting-point we shall, no doubt, find in the tripod basis of the science—

ANATOMY, PHYSIOLOGY, AND CHEMISTRY.

The grey nucleus in the floor of the fourth ventricle, underneath the eminentia teres, has heretofore been considered the common nucleus of the facial and abducens nerves. Dr. W. R. Gowers, as the result of a pathological experiment recently observed, believes that it is certain that the grey substance of the nucleus belongs to the abducens nerve, and that the facialis fibres pass through it simply, but originate probably at the same place as the other fibres passing along the genu facialis. Stilling states that the opinion hitherto held, that the fibres of the optic tract have no connection with the crus cerebri, is incorrect; on the other hand, he finds that a rather considerable part of these fibres arises from a large nucleus situated in the lower crus, which is laid open only when there is nothing to be seen of the substantia nigra in the section. Nicati details an experiment demonstrating the fact that the optic decussation is incomplete in the cat. In consequence of the analogies existing between the chiasm of the cat and that of man, he believes that this fact holds good in the case of the latter also. M.M. Franck and Pires, as a result of their recent investigations, confirm the conclusion, arrived at from pathological study, that the white fibres which start from the excitable regions of the convolutions and connect them with the central parts of the brain, are grouped in distinct bundles, which preserve their functional independence throughout their course in the white matter. Vulpian’s late researches go to indicate the great probability of the origin of the chorda tympani from the fifth nerve. M. Luys points out that the projection of the paracentral lobule