extends from the bottom of the fissure to the floor of the fourth ventricle. Further, certain of the cranial nerves pass through the substance of the medulla oblongata, and are attached to its surface in series with the roots of the spinal nerves; thus, the fibers of the hypoglossal nerve represent the upward continuation of the anterior nerve roots, and emerge in linear series from a furrow termed the **antero-lateral sulcus.** Similarly, the accessory, vagus, and glossopharyngeal nerves correspond with the posterior nerve roots, and are attached to the bottom of a sulcus named the **postero-lateral sulcus.** Advantage is taken of this arrangement to subdivide each half of the medulla oblongata into three districts, **anterior, middle,** and **posterior.** Although these three districts appear to be directly continuous with the corresponding funiculi of the medulla spinalis, they do not necessarily contain the same fibers, since some of the fasciculi of the medulla spinalis end in the medulla oblongata, while others alter their course in passing through it.

The **anterior district** (Fig. 679) is named the **pyramid** (*pyramis medullæ oblongatæ*) and lies between the anterior median fissure and the antero-lateral sulcus. Its upper end is slightly constricted, and between it and the pons the fibers of the abducent nerve emerge; a little below the pons it becomes enlarged and prominent, and finally tapers into the anterior funiculus of the medulla spinalis, with which, at first sight, it appears to be directly continuous.

The two pyramids contain the motor fibers which pass from the brain to the medulla oblongata and medulla spinalis, corticobulbar and corticospinal fibers. When these pyramidal fibers are traced down-

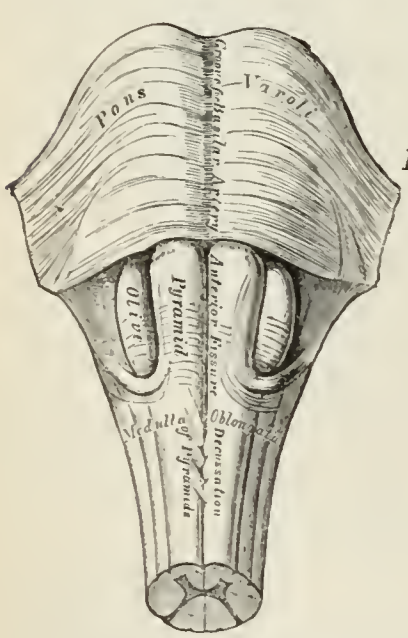

Fig. 679.—Medulla oblongata and pons. Anterior surface.

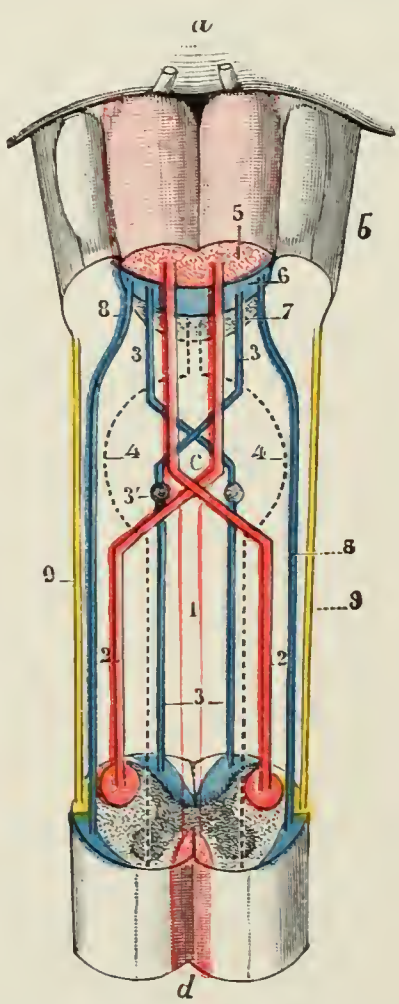

Fig. 680.—Decussation of pyramids. Scheme showing passage of various fasciculi from medulla spinalis to medulla oblongata. *a*. Pons. *b*. Medulla oblongata. *c*. Decussation of the pyramids. *d*. Section of cervical part of medulla spinalis. 1. Anterior cerebrospinal fasciculus (in red). 2. Lateral cerebrospinal fasciculus (in red). 3. Sensory tract (fasciculi gracilis et cuneatus) (in blue). 3′. Gracile and cuneate nuclei. 4. Antero-lateral proper fasciculus (in dotted line). 5. Pyramid. 6. Lemniscus. 7. Medial longitudinal fasciculus. 8. Ventral spinocerebellar fasciculus (in blue). 9. Dorsal spinocerebellar fasciculus (in yellow). (Testut.)

ward it is found that some two-thirds or more of them leave the pyramids in successive bundles, and decussate in the anterior median fissure, forming what is termed the **pyramidal decussation.** Having crossed the middle line, they pass down in the posterior part of the lateral funiculus as the lateral cerebrospinal fascic-