

LOWER LIMB.

BACK OF THIGH—No. 2.

THE BICEPS, SEMIMEMBRANOSUS AND SEMITENDINOSUS HAVE BEEN REMOVED, TO EXPOSE THE ADDUCTOR MAGNUS AND THE GREAT SCIATIC NERVE LYING ON IT.

The great sciatic nerve, arising from L 4, 5, S 1, 2, 3, runs downwards in the thigh on the posterior surface of the adductor magnus, under cover of the long head of the biceps muscle, as far as to the upper angle of the popliteal space, where it divides into the internal and external popliteal nerves. This division often occurs higher up, and in all cases the two parts, tibial and peroneal, of which the nerve consists, can be made out, and the branches which are given off by the single trunk can be referred to one or other of the two divisions.

Thus, from the tibial division arise branches to the semimembranosus, semitendinosus, long head of biceps and to the dorsal, or hamstring portion, of the adductor magnus muscles, while the outer, or peroneal division gives a branch to the short head of the biceps, and often an articular branch to the knee-joint.

The adductor magnus muscle consists of two portions. The one, truly adductor in character, arises from the anterior surface of the arch of the pubis. Its fibres are horizontal in direction above, and oblique lower down, and are inserted into the back of the femur internal to the gluteal ridge, into the linea aspera, and into a small portion of the internal supracondylar ridge.

The other portion, hamstring in character, arises from the lower part of the ischial tuberosity, and passes in a vertical direction, forming the inner thick part of the muscle, to be inserted into the adductor tubercle, and the internal intermuscular septum.

The opening for the popliteal artery is seen between the two portions, and the vertical portion is supplied by the great sciatic nerve, and the horizontal and oblique by the obturator nerve.

The short head of the biceps arises from the outer lip of the linea aspera of the femur, from the upper half of the external supracondylar ridge, and from the external intermuscular septum.

Vessels. Piercing the insertion of the adductor magnus are seen several vessels, the perforating branches of the profunda femoris artery, usually four in number, forming an anastomotic chain in the back of the thigh, which communicates with the circumflex vessels above and with the articular branches of the popliteal artery below.

The figures indicate—

1. Vastus externus muscle.
2. Short head of biceps flexor cruris muscle, and its insertion.
3. Adductor magnus muscle, vertical fibres.
4. Adductor magnus muscle, upper horizontal fibres (sometimes called adductor minimus).

5. Insertion of gluteus maximus muscle.
6. Tendons of semimembranosus and semitendinosus muscles.
7. Aperture in adductor magnus for femoral vessels.

8. Adductor gracilis muscle.
9. Sartorius muscle.
10. Tendon of adductor magnus.
11. Vastus internus muscle.
12. External intermuscular septum.
13. Trunk of great sciatic nerve.
14. Popliteal vessels.

