

lateral wall of the lesser pelvis, above and in front of the obturator vessels, to the upper part of the obturator foramen. Here it enters the thigh, and divides

into an anterior and a posterior branch, which are separated at first by some of the fibers of the Obturator externus, and lower down by the Adductor brevis.

The **anterior branch** (*ramus anterior*) (Fig. 827) leaves the pelvis in front of the Obturator externus and descends in front of the Adductor brevis, and behind the Pectineus and Adductor longus; at the lower border of the latter muscle it communicates with the anterior cutaneous and saphenous branches of the femoral nerve, forming a kind of plexus. It then descends upon the femoral artery, to which it is finally distributed. Near the obturator foramen the nerve gives off an articular branch to the hip-joint. Behind the Pectineus, it distributes branches to the Adductor longus and Gracilis, and usually to the Adductor brevis, and in rare cases to the Pectineus; it receives a communicating branch from the accessory obturator nerve when that nerve is present.

Occasionally the communicating branch to the anterior cutaneous and saphenous branches of the femoral is continued down, as a cutaneous branch, to the thigh and leg. When this is so, it emerges from beneath the lower border of the Adductor longus, descends along the posterior margin of the Sartorius to the medial side of the knee, where it pierces the deep fascia, communicates with the saphenous nerve, and is distributed to the skin of the tibial side of the leg as low down as its middle.

The **posterior branch** (*ramus posterior*) pierces the anterior part of the Obturator externus, and supplies this muscle; it then passes behind the Adductor brevis on the front of the Adductor

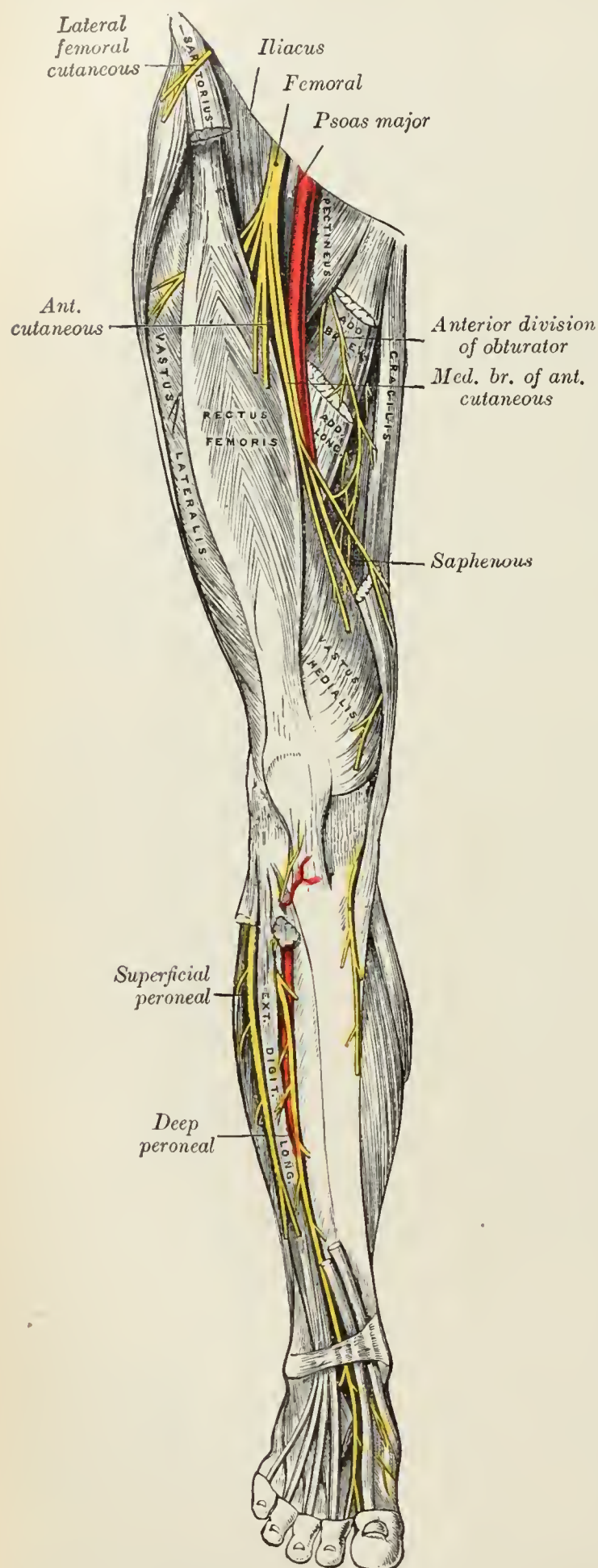


FIG. 827.—Nerves of the right lower extremity. Front view.