

beyond this to the superficial tissues of the groin, where some fibres are attached to that portion of the skin which eventually becomes the scrotum; others are directed inwards, and are attached to the pubis and the root of the penis, while other fibres, again, may be traced to Scarpa's triangle and even to the perineum, where they may be attached to the ramus and the tuberosity of the ischium.

In the sixth month the processus vaginalis makes its appearance. This pouch-like outgrowth of the peritoneum is neither pulled down by the gubernaculum nor pushed down before the advancing testicle, but appears to be a true outgrowth of the peritoneum through the abdominal wall in the situation of the inguinal canal in front of the gubernaculum, deriving, as it extends towards the scrotum, coverings from the internal and external oblique muscles. This gives an explanation of the fully formed processus vaginalis and tunica vaginalis, which are commonly present even when the testicle, owing to the failure of the normal process of descent, may never even have entered the inguinal canal.

There is still a good deal of uncertainty as to the actual mechanism by which the descent of the testicle is brought about, especially as to the part played by the gubernaculum. Probably the principle of "unequal growth," as seen in the marked development of the lumbar region of the spine at this stage of foetal development, has a good deal to do with the change in position; if there is a rapid increased growth of the structures bounding the posterior wall of the abdominal cavity above the level of the primitive testicle, accompanied by a comparatively small increase of the structures below this level, there must naturally be an apparent movement of the testicle towards the lower part of the peritoneal cavity.

The presence of muscular fibres in the gubernaculum suggests that this structure may exert some active influence in drawing the testicle down towards the scrotum, but, on the other hand, the scattered nature of these muscular elements and the presence of cellular tissue has led many to regard it as having a more passive function, viz., that of drawing the testicle towards the scrotum by a slow fibroid change and contraction in the con-