

*Intermediate group.*—The muscles which constitute this group are five in number, and are placed one over the palmar aspect of each metacarpal bone. That in relation to the metacarpal bone of the thumb is the flexor brevis pollicis, and that lying upon the metacarpal bone of the little finger is the flexor brevis minimi digiti. But further, each muscle consists of two slips, which in the case of the short flexors of the thumb and little finger, remain distinct and separate from each other throughout, whilst in the case of the other three they arise by a common tendon, and only separate the one from the other at a point corresponding to the middle of the metacarpal bones. The dorsal interossei are in no way connected with these muscles.

*Flexor brevis minimi digiti.*—This muscle is not so strongly marked as the short flexor of the thumb. Its ulnar head arises from the unciform bone, and from the annular ligament, whilst its radial portion takes origin from the carpus somewhat deeper. They extend downwards side by side, and are inserted one into each side of the base of the first phalanx of the little finger.

*Flexor brevis pollicis.*—The two slips of this muscle arise close together, from the second row of carpal bones, and are inserted one into each side of the base of the first phalanx of the thumb.

The three remaining muscles of this group (viz., those which correspond to the index, middle, and ring fingers) arise partly from the base of the metacarpal bone with which each is associated, and partly from the ligamentous bands on the palmar aspect of the carpus. Half-way down the metacarpus each muscle divides into two slips, and these are continued downwards so as to embrace the base of the first phalanx of the finger with which they are connected. Here the slips end in delicate tendons, which are inserted one into each side of the phalangeal base, partly into bone and partly into the extensor tendon.

These muscles lie in series with the short flexors of the thumb and little finger, and only differ from them in having each a single origin, and in being inserted in part into the dorsal extensor expansion. Moreover, their attachments indicate a correspondence of action. When the two slips of each muscle act in unison, they must flex the fingers at the metacarpo-phalangeal joints; when they act separately and independently of each other, the action must be one of abduction or adduction, according to the slip employed, and this latter action must be performed most effectively by those muscles connected with the thumb and little finger, inasmuch as their slips are distinct from each other throughout, and not in any way hampered by the common origin of the others. The insertion of those muscles connected with the index, middle, and ring fingers into the extensor tendon, allows them to take a part in extending the fingers—a privilege which the flexor brevis pollicis and flexor brevis minimi digiti from their purely phalangeal insertions do not enjoy.