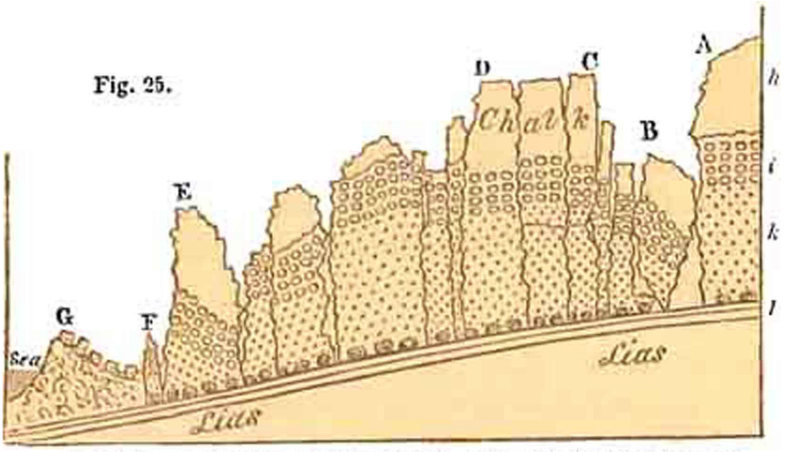
An extraordinary landslip occurred on the 24th of December, 1839, on the coast between Lyme Regis and Axmouth, which has been described by the Rev. W. D. Conybeare, to whose kindness I am indebted for the accompanying section, fig. 25. The tract of downs ranging there along the coast is capped by chalk (*h*), which rests on sandstone, alternating with chert (*i*), beneath which is more than 100 feet of loose sand (*k*), with concretions at the bottom, and belonging, like *i*, to the green-sand formation; the whole of the above masses, *h*, *i*, *k*, reposing on retentive beds of clay (*l*), belonging to the lias, which shelves towards the sea. Numerous springs issuing from the loose sand (*k*) have gradually removed

Fig. 25.



Landslip, near Axmouth, Dec. 1839. (Rev. W. D. Conybeare.)

A. Tract of Downs still remaining at their original level.
B. New ravine.
C, D. Sunk and fractured strip united to A. before the convulsion.
D, E. Bendon undercliff as before, but more fissured, and thrust forward about fifty feet towards the sea.
F. Pyramidal crag, sunk from seventy to twenty feet in height.
G. New reef upheaved from the sea.

portions of it, and thus undermined the superstratum, so as to have caused subsidences at former times, and to have produced a line of undercliff between D and E. In 1839 an excessively wet season had saturated all the rocks with moisture, so as to increase the weight of the incumbent mass, from which the support had already been withdrawn by the action of springs. Thus the superstrata were precipitated into hollows prepared for them, and the adjacent masses of partially undermined rock, to which the movement was communicated, were made to slide down on a slippery basis of watery sand towards the sea. These causes gave rise to a convulsion, which began on the morning of the 24th of December, with a crashing noise; and, on the evening of the same day, fissures were seen opening in the ground, and the walls of tenements rending and sinking, until a deep chasm or ravine, B, was formed extending nearly three quarters of a mile in length, with a depth of from 100 to 150 feet, and a breadth exceeding 240 feet. At the bottom of this deep gulf lie fragments of the original surface thrown together in the wildest confusion. In consequence of lateral movements, the tract intervening between the new fissure and the sea, including the ancient undercliff, was fractured, and the whole line of sea-cliff carried bodily forwards for many yards. "A remarkable pyramidal