

mining for coal, when it is termed a "want." Channels have been cut out of a coal-seam, or rather out of the bed of vegetation which ultimately became coal, and these winding and branching channels have been filled up with sandy or muddy sediment. The accompanying plan (Fig. 199) represents a portion of a remarkable series of such channels traversing the Coleford High Delf coal-seam in the Forest of Dean. The chief one, locally known as the "Horse" (*a b*), has been traced for about two miles, and varies in width from 170 to 340 yards. It is joined by smaller tributaries (*c c*), which run for some way approximately parallel to it. The coal has either been prevented from accumulating in contemporaneous water-channels, or, while still in the

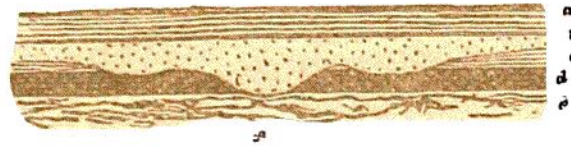


Fig. 200.—Section of a channel in a coal-seam (*B*).

condition of soft bog-like vegetation, has been eroded by streamlets flowing through it.⁵ A section drawn across such a buried channel exhibits the structure represented in Fig. 200, where a bed of fire-clay (*e*), full of roots and evidently an old soil, supports a bed of coal (*d*) and of shale (*c*), which, during the deposition of this series of strata, have been cut out into a channel at *f*. A deposition of sand (*b*) has then filled up the excavation, and a layer of mud (*a*) has covered up the whole.

Currents of very unequal force and transporting power may alternate in such a way that after fine silt has for some time been accumulated, coarse shingle may next be swept along, and may be so irregularly bedded with the softer

⁵ Buddle, Geol. Trans. vi. 1842, p. 215.