

If these islands be permitted for the above reasons to be called non-oceanic, then, by a slight stretch, the same courtesy may be extended to S. Georgia (96 miles long and 10 broad),<sup>1</sup> for the chain of the Andes, where it enters Tierra del Fuego, takes a turn to the eastward, and the eastern cape points direct to S. Georgia. The rocks of Tierra del Fuego consist of clay-slate,<sup>2</sup> and so also do those of the Falkland Islands, which lie between it and S. Georgia. This similarity of composition points to a former connection.

Without committing oneself to an opinion upon the profitableness or otherwise of reconstructing the geography of past periods of the world's history, one cannot help seeing that this great question of the permanence of ocean basins is one of fundamental importance. At one time I was quite disposed to reject the theory, as does Mr. Mellard Reade. But the course of study which I went through in writing my *Physics of the Earth's Crust* led me to change my opinions, on grounds rather physical than geological. If there is any weight in the arguments I have there put forward, they give a support to the theory from a fresh point of view.

Extensive changes of level seem to me to be the most difficult to account for of all the phenomena of geology. And the greater the changes, the greater the difficulty. The permanence of the respective areas seems therefore to involve less difficulty than their interchange. I published in "Nature,"<sup>3</sup> about two years ago, a suggestion to account for the origination of ocean basins. It is rather remarkable that the first and only allusion to it which I have seen has just now come from New Zealand in Dr. Haast's address at Canterbury College.<sup>4</sup> Accepting Professor Darwin's theory that the moon broke away from the earth more than fifty million years ago, I think the ocean-basins may be the scar that was formed, and that the basement rocks of continents are fragments of the crust which had already solidified, and which were left behind. It has since occurred to me that the Archæan rocks may be veritable remnants of it. I would refer to my published article for the details of the grounds on which I think this theory plausible. Dr. Haast uses rather too strong an expression in saying, that I have attempted to prove it. It is probably incapable of proof, even if true.

O. FISHER.

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THE INTERNATIONAL GEOLOGICAL CONGRESS POSTPONED.

SIR,—Will you allow me to announce in your columns that the International Geological Congress which was to have been held in Berlin next month is *postponed to September, 1885*, in consequence of the outbreak of cholera in the South of Europe.

WOODWARDIAN MUSEUM,  
CAMBRIDGE, *Aug. 12th, 1884.*

THOS. MCKENNY HUGHES.

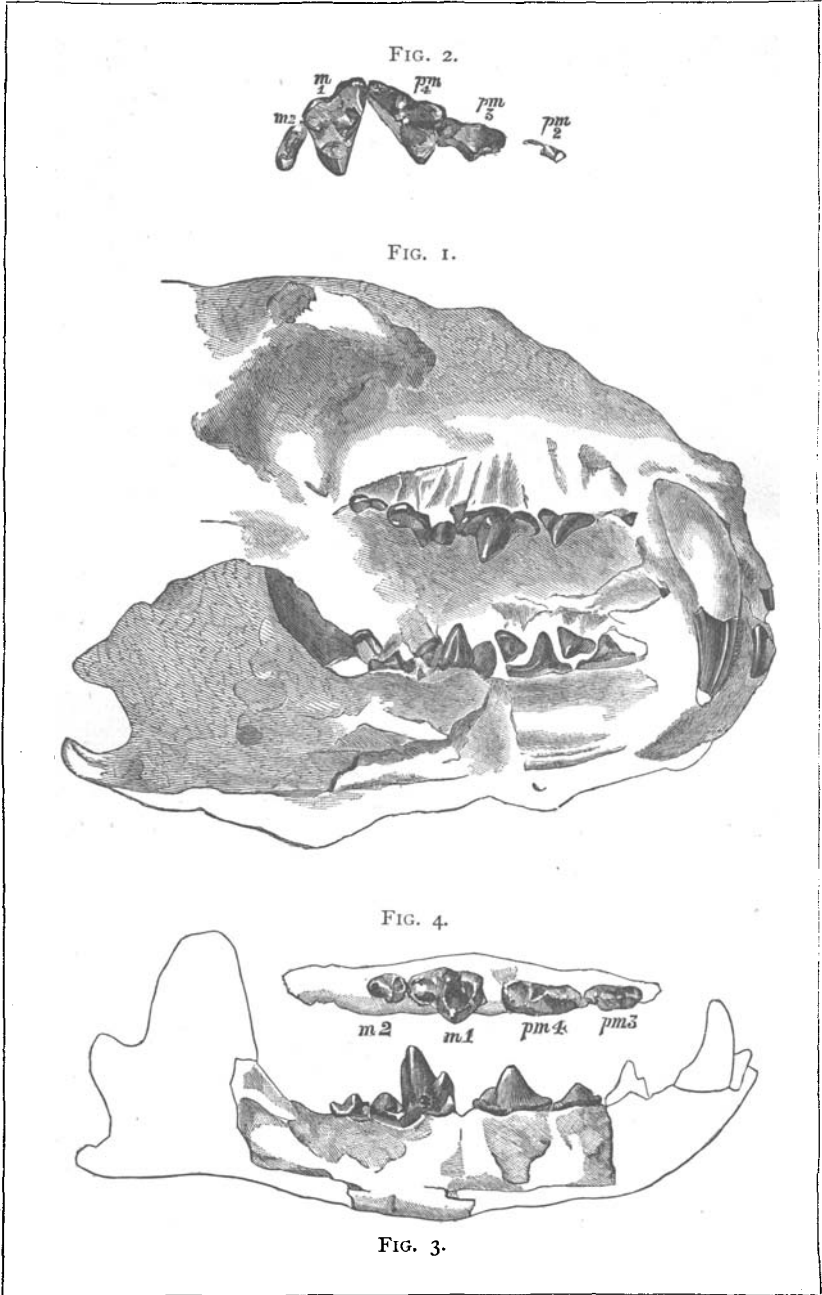
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<sup>1</sup> Darwin's *Naturalist's Voyage*, p. 248.

<sup>2</sup> Scrope's *Volcanos*, 1862, p. 434.

<sup>3</sup> "Nature," Jan. 12, 1882.

<sup>4</sup> "Nature," Apr. 24, 1884, p. 609.



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From the Eocene Freshwater Beds at Hordwell, Hampshire.