G. DAVIES SHERBORN
DONAVIT.

13 Park St
Cambridge.
11 March 1902.

Dear Sherborn

Many thanks for your letter. I am very glad to find that you sympathise with me; for I really think that I have not been quite fairly treated.

I do not accuse Strahan of conscious plagiarism. I only think that he is gifted with a wonderfully weak memory. The principal point in his paper is identical with one of the principal points in mine (on which, at the time, he criticised me very candidly);

and if I had not taken refuge in the pages of the Zoological Magazine, I could have laid no claim to priority in the notion.

I do not know who was referee for my paper. I always assumed that it was Strahan, but may be wrong. — If I might hazard a guess at what has happened, I should say that Strahan was referee, that he never read the paper but only glanced through it, & advised its rejection, but that his mind has unconsciously assimilated the ideas, & brought them forth again in a somewhat incomplete

form, which, I confess, appears to me to be no improvement. He is like the Scotchman who took two years to see a joke & then repeated it incorrectly, with half its point gone.

I think the referee system is an abominable one. Personally I don't claim to be a better geologist than anyone else; but still I am not in the habit of writing a paper unless I think I know more on that particular point or district in question than others do. And it does not seem to me that anyone else can pronounce a final judgment until he has done as much work on the special subject — when then it is just possible

that he also might be wrong. — Besides, we don't want final judgments, — "the authors alone are responsible" — & the geological world surely does not want referees to save itself from the trouble of forming its own opinions.

Yours truly
Philip Lake.