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*Stearns, R. E. G.*





(From the *American Naturalist*, January, 1882.)

VERRILLIA BLAKEI OR HALIPTERIS BLAKEI.—In the San Francisco *Mining and Scientific Press*, of August 9th, 1873, I published a "Description of a new species of Alcyonoid Polyp, which I placed in Cuvier's genus Pavonaria, and gave ~~to~~ it the specific name of *blakei*, in recognition of the courtesy of Dr. James Blake, who kindly furnished the specimens to describe. Subsequently, nine days after the publication of the first description as above, at a meeting of the California Academy of Sciences, held on the 18th day of August, I removed the species to a new sub-genus which I called Verrillia, in honor of Professor Verrill, of Yale College.

The characters of this sub-genus were defined as follows: "Polypidon linear-elongate, round or ovate in cross section. Axis round, slender, bony; polyps arranged in two unilateral longitudinal series."

In *Nature* for November 6th, 1873, Dr. J. E. Gray, in an article entitled, "On the stick fish (*Osteocella septentrionalis*), and the habits of the sea pens," endeavored to make it appear that his genus and species, should have precedence, or the names so given by him should stand instead of mine, and gave what he called "the synonyma of these animals," presenting the sequence of dates of publication of the various papers, to show the priority of his own.

To this communication of Dr. Gray's I replied in a paper read before the California Academy of Sciences on the 16th of March, 1874, in which I reviewed the claims of Dr. Gray and his genus and species *Osteocella septentrionalis*, and denied the validity thereof, on the ground that "No description sufficiently accurate to be worthy of consideration can be made of the axial rods or bones alone, of this class of animal forms, nor can species be satisfac-



torily determined without the fleshy portion; nor in our present state of knowledge can the microscope determine these points."

*e* In the *Zoölogical Record* for 1873, Vol. x (pp. 508-9), Dr. Lutken, editor of the department Cœlenterata, uses the following language: "Its generic identity with the Australian species (type of *Osteocella*), cannot be established so long as the latter is known only from the axial skeleton."

It will be seen by the quotation that Dr. Lutken practically sustains my position.

My description, read before the Academy, August 18th, 1873, was soon after reprinted in the *American Journal of Science and Art*, to which Professor Verrill added a foot-note as follows: "A recent examination of a specimen, convinces me that this species is most nearly allied to the *Halipteris christii* Kölliker (Koren and Dar., sp.), and probably ought to be referred to the same genus."

While regretting that the generic title with which I had associated the name of a justly distinguished naturalist, as well as a personal friend, must yield to precedence, I can only accept his suggestion, and place the species in Kölliker's genus *Halipterus*. The allusions herein to the late Dr. Gray are not intended to revive any differences of opinion as between that eminent authority and myself, but are incidentally introduced, being necessary to the continuity of the record of my own connection with the form which furnishes the title to this paper.

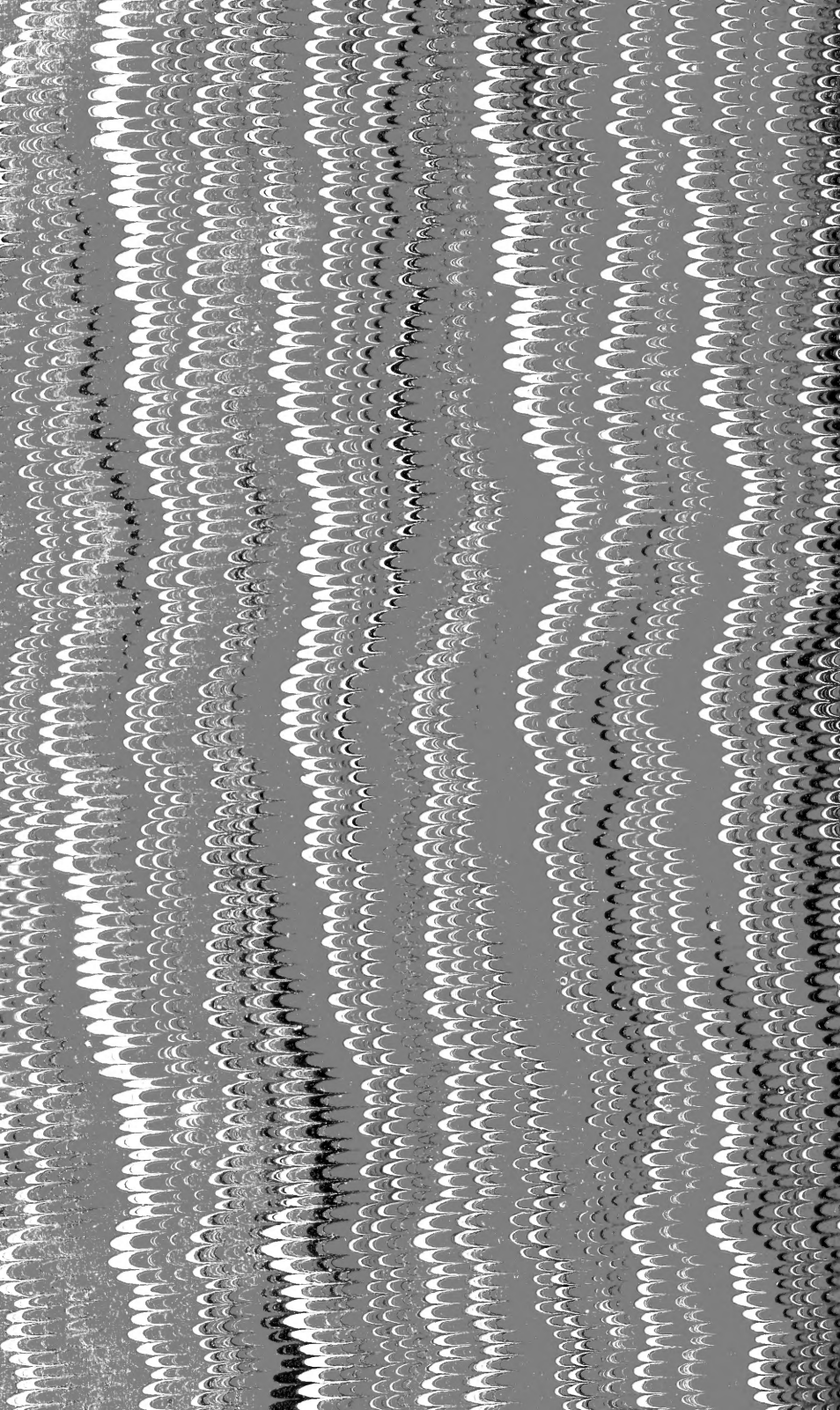
I was not aware until recently that I had not already called the attention of the Academy to Professor Verrill's note, which long-continued sickness in my family, and the pressure, until very recently, of official duties caused me to overlook.—*R. E. C. Stearns, Berkely, California, Nov. 9, 1881.*

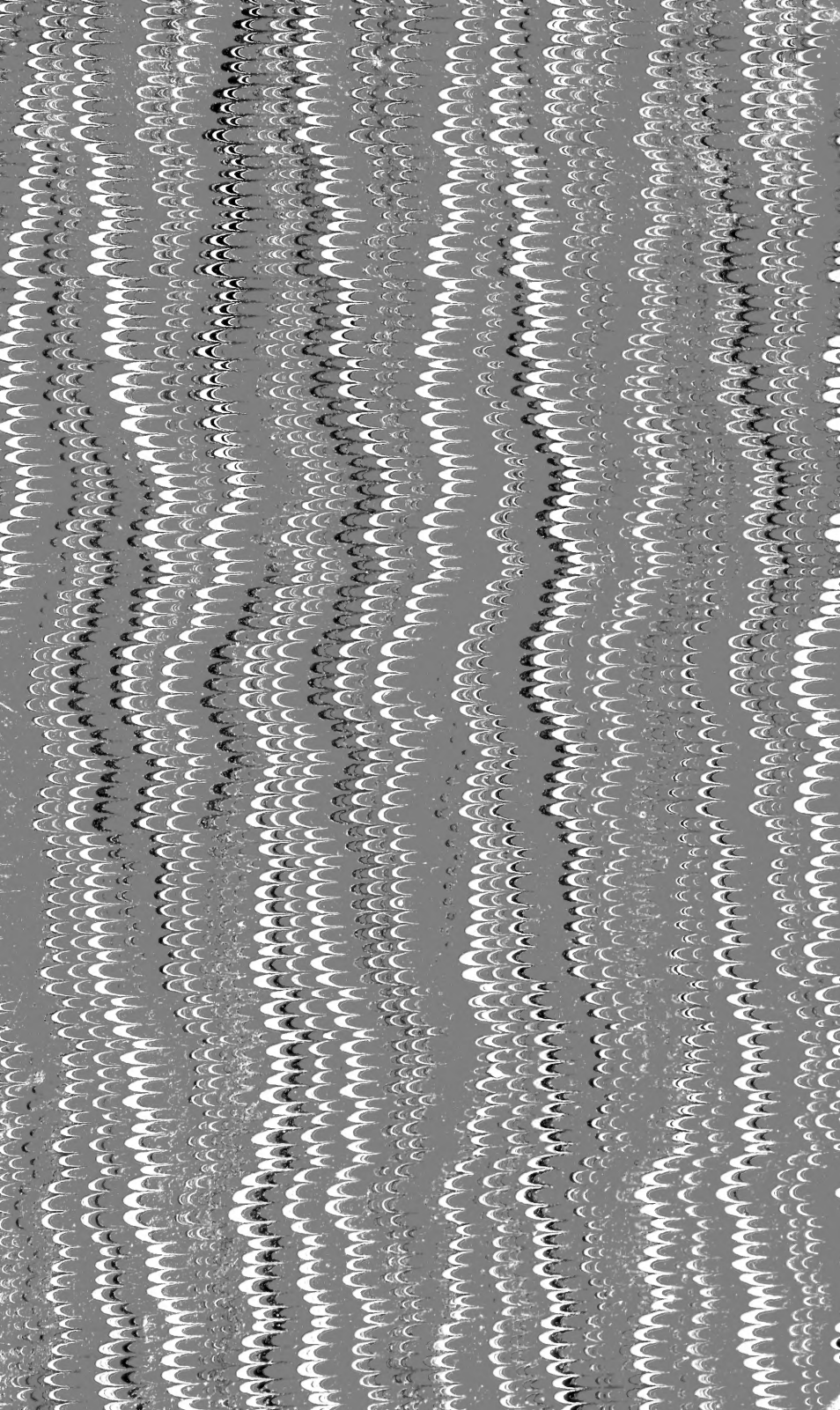




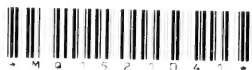








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