NOTE ON MERULA CONFINS (BAIRD).

By ROBERT RIDGWAY.

The type of this species, obtained by Xantus, in 1860, at Todos Santos, Lower California, has remained unique up to the present year. Two additional specimens, however, have lately been received at the National Museum from Mr. L. Belding, who has so ably supplemented the work done by Xantus in the vicinity of Cape St. Lucas;* and since considerable doubt has been expressed by some authors as to the validity of the species, some remarks upon these additional specimens may not be unacceptable.

No. 89796, adult (sex not determined), Laguna, February 1, 1883: Very similar to the type, but lower parts even paler, the entire abdomen, flanks, anal region, and crissum being white (the lower tail-coverts, however, mixed with bluish-gray, and the sides washed with the same); the ground-color of the breast and jugulum is exactly the same as in the type (rich creamy-buff), but this is more distinctly obscured by a gray clouding. The white superciliary stripe is very distinct, beginning above the lores and extending quite uninterruptedly over the eyes and auriculars, nearly or quite to the end of the latter. The bill is dark brown, with the edge of the maxilla and basal half (or more) of the mandible yellow; the feet horn-brown. Wing .5.10, tail .4, culmen .85, tarsus 1.20, middle toe .85.

No. 89797, ? ad., Laguna, February 3: This specimen is in very perfect feather, and, so far as plumage is concerned, is almost a duplicate of the type. Owing to the more perfect condition of the feathers, however, the colors are softer and somewhat richer, but the color of the jugulum, breast, sides, and linings of the wing is of an exactly similar creamy-buff, or soft creamy-ochraceous, the breast clouded with pale

*Although but just commencing his second season's work, Mr. Belding has already made several additions to the number of species known to be peculiar to Lower California at the conclusion of Xantus's explorations; and when the objective point of his present trip, the pine-clad mountains of the interior, shall have been reached and thoroughly worked, the number will no doubt be materially increased. The new species and races already discovered by Mr. Belding are the following: (1) Lophophanes inornatus cinereus, (2) Psaltriparus grinar, (3) Geothlypis beldingi (see p. 344, vol. 5, of these Proceedings), (4) Junco bairdi, and (5) Rallus beldingi (vol. 5, p. 345). Xantus discovered altogether nine forms peculiar to the vicinity of the Cape, as follows: (1) Merula confinis, (2) Methriopterus cinereus, (3) Cupidorrhynchus affinis, (4) Passerellus guttatus (doubtful), (5) Pipilo fusca albignula, (6) Basilimna xantus, (7) Picus scolaris lucasanus, (8) Melanerpes formicivorus augustifrons, and (9) Halyopteryx microsoma, the latter, however, a pelagic bird, and therefore probably of wider distribution. In addition to those named above, Mr. Belding has sent single skins of several forms which will prove to be local races should additional examples agree with them in certain peculiarities noted, while two Asiatic species (Motacilla ocellaris and Anthus cervinus), besides a number of North American species, have been added to the Cape fauna.
PRELIMINARY NOTE ON THE CRYSSTALLINE SCHISTS OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA.

By GEORGE P. MERRILL.

As is well known, the region about Washington, D. C., is very poor in crystalline rocks, they being confined entirely to that narrow portion of the District in the immediate vicinity of Rock Creek and the strip of country to the westward included between the creek and the Potomac River.

It is probably due largely to this poverty of material that these rocks have been so little studied, the only reference to the character of the formations that I am able to find dating back nearly fifty years. It is as follows:

"Rock Creek and its immediate vicinity is the line between the primitive formation and the Tertiary. From Rock Creek up the Potomac the borders of the stream are pregnant with primitive rocks in situ and in boulders, with the exception of a few small pieces of alluvial soil here and there in the valley of the river. This is the case for 20 miles or more, when the country changes to old red sandstone, which continues 20 or 25 miles farther up the river, with occasional ridges of breccia, or pudding-stone. * * * About a mile, however, east of the entrance of Rock Creek into the Potomac, on the southern point of the city, near the glass-house, the final termination of the primitive rocks that line the bed and banks of the Potomac above clearly takes place. In digging wells beyond this point rocks seldom obtrude; the alluvial soil everywhere prevails. Rock Creek separates the primitive from the alluvial soil. In the former gneiss abounds, which is succeeded by amphibolite rock, or grinstein. The gneiss contains small crystallized tubes of magnetic iron, veins of feldspar, and quartz of opaque white color. * * * The rock employed to form the foundation, or base, of the houses in Washington is a species of gneiss composed of feldspar, quartz, and mica, of a leafy texture owing to the abundance and disposition of the mica. It contains primitive sulphurous iron, and also particles of the same metal which are attracted by the needle."