

THE WILSON BULLETIN

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EDITORIAL

The next Annual Meeting of the Wilson Ornithological Club will be held at Des Moines, Iowa, during the last week in December, in conjunction with the meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. The exact dates will be announced in due time. Reduced railroad fare of one and a half for the round trip is available to all who attend this meeting. It is not too soon to plan to attend and present a paper on the program.

We know of two private collections of mounted Iowa birds which have been put on the market within the last few years, because of the owner's decease. Both are rather large private collections, mounted by the old-style methods. They may have some exhibition value, but probably their greatest value will be found in the data which they might furnish for locality records. This statement is not made for the purpose of advertising these collections, but in deprecation of the fact that such collections are usually so soon scattered and lost, and make very little contribution to science. The heirs often have no interest in science, but do have an exaggerated notion of the monetary value of the specimens. No institution cares to pay the price, and the result is deterioration and loss. In too many cases such "scientific" collecting makes no contribution to science. If these private collections could finally land in some institution they might be better justified. Would it be possible in granting permits for scientific collecting to make a provision that the specimens collected under it shall eventually revert legally to a certain institution to be agreed upon and named?