

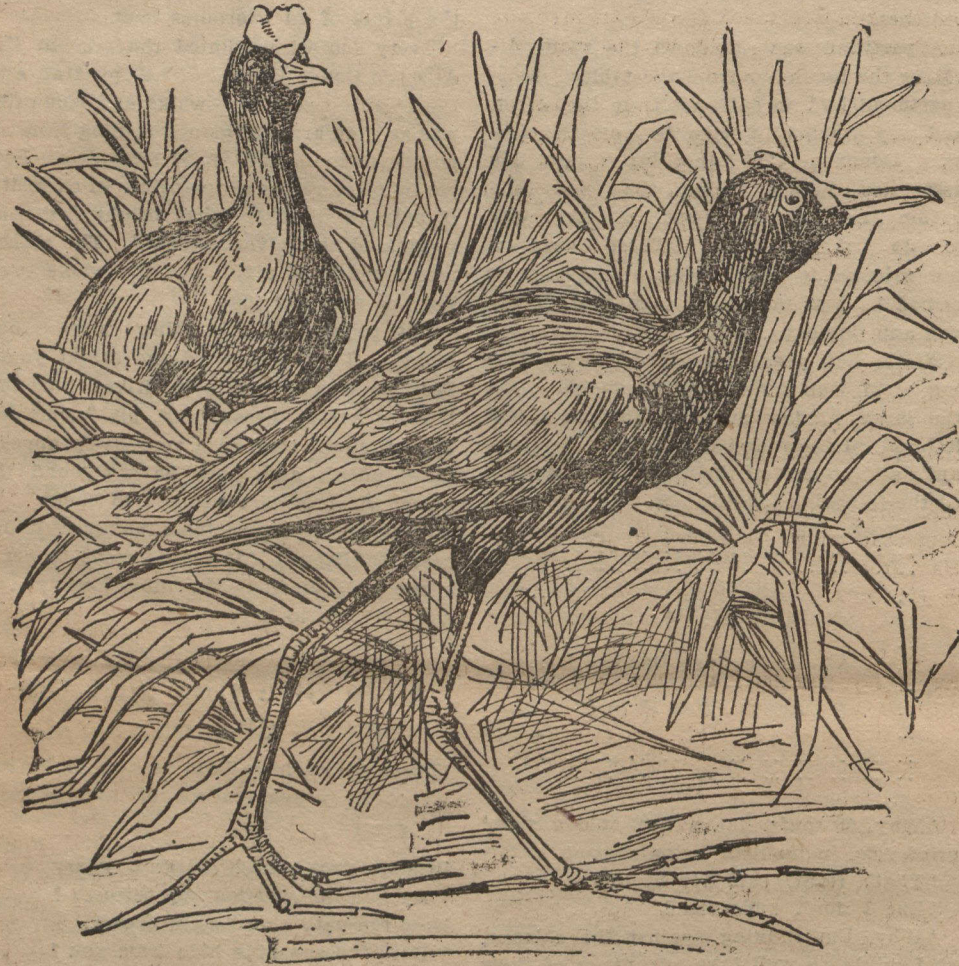
The Jacana.

The common jacana is a native of South-ern America, and there are other species scattered over Africa, Asia and Australia. The Australian species is a good diver, but a bad flyer. Their powers of diving and remaining under water are equal to those of any bird; on the other hand their powers of flight are very weak. They will, however, mount up fifteen or twenty yards and fly from one end of the lake to the other, a distance of half or three-quarters of a mile; but generally they merely rise above the surface of the water and fly off for about a hundred yards. During flight their long legs are thrown out horizontally

leaves at each step, they are slightly sunk below the surface by the weight, so that the bird appears to be really walking upon the water.—From 'How to Know the Shore Birds.'

A Sheriff's Sale.

No one was greatly surprised when it was announced that Lyman Hart's home and household effects were to be sold at public auction by the sheriff of the county. He had 'failed,' and now he was to be 'sold out.' Many of his neighbors said they were 'dreadful sorry for the Harts.' They declared that it was 'all Lyman's own fault.'



COMMON JACANA IN FEEDING GROUND.

to their full length. While feeding, they utter a slowly repeated cluck, cluck. The stomach is extremely muscular, and the food consists of aquatic insects and some kind of vegetable matter.

The general color of the common jacana is black, with a slight green gloss, taking a rusty red tinting on the back and wing coverts. The primary quill-feathers of the wing are green, and the wings are furnished at the end with long and sharp claws. In the African species these spurs are hardly perceptible. At the base of the beak is a curious leathery appendage, rising upon the forehead above and depending toward the chin below. The claws are all very long, especially that of the hind toe, which is nearly straight, and longer than the toe from which it proceeds.

All jacanas are remarkable for the extraordinary development of their toes, which are so long and so slender that they seem to have been drawn out like wire, and to impede the progress of their owner. These elongated toes are, however, of the greatest use, as they enable the bird to walk upon the floating leaves which overspread the surface of many rivers, and to pick its food from between the leaves on which it walks. As the bird marches upon the leaves, the long toes dividing the pressure upon several

Old Nat Dake, the richest man in town, and one who had never been known to give away a dollar, said savagely: 'It's all very well to talk about gen'rosity, but there's such a thing as being just before you're gen'rous, and I've told Lyme Hart so many a time. No man can give away as recklessly as he did and keep a roof over his head. Charity's all right, but the place for it to begin is at home. There ain't been a week in the past ten years when Lyme Hart ain't had some one hangin' on to him that hadn't no claim on him, an' that he'd ought to have sent to the poor-house. And now he's being sold out because he can't pay his taxes nor the mortgages on his place and furniture.'

Nat Dake did not add, but every one knew, that he held most of the notes and mortgages Lyman Hart could not pay. They knew that these notes and mortgages called for a rate of interest higher than old Nat Dake could have exacted had he not taken advantage of Lyman Hart's extreme necessity.

They knew further that Nat Dake had long coveted the Hart farm because it adjoined his own, and that he secretly rejoiced over the distress which enabled him to take the farm from Lyman Hart.

Even his kinder and truer friends were of the opinion that Lyman Hart had not been wise. 'He has taken in and done for them that had no earthly claim on him,' said garrulous old Ann Haskins, who had known Lyman from his boyhood, and whose sorrow for him was sincere. 'What earthly claim did his cousin's widow and her three children have on him that he should keep them a whole year after his cousin died and left them without a penny in the world?

'And when old Nancy David's husband died and they was taking her to the poor-house, if Lyman Hart didn't meet the keeper of the poor farm with old Nancy in his waggon, and because she was wailing and crying, what did Lyme do? He just got right out of his waggon and lifted her and her poor little bundle of clothes into it, and took her home with him, and kept her there until she died, two years later.

'He said he did it because old Nancy and his mother had been great friends, and because he said Nancy had been good to him when he was a boy, and had nursed his mother through her last sickness. That was Lyme Hart all over.'

Lyman, in his great generosity, had often loaned money unwisely. He had indorsed notes for others because they were unfortunate, and he had had very many of the notes to pay. The generous man had recognized, possibly without sufficient carefulness, the high law comprehended in the words, 'Bear ye one another's burdens.' This had made him a brother to any one in trouble, and opened his heart to every cry of the needy. And now he was to be sold out under the red flag of the sheriff!

Every one knew that old Nathaniel Dake would bid in the house and farm, for he held heavy mortgages upon them and there was no one else in the neighborhood able to buy them. The household furniture, live stock and farming utensils were also to be sold under a chattel mortgage, and the good man and his wife and their children would be left almost penniless.

Lyman had a cheerful and hopeful spirit, but it was not to be wondered at that he was much cast down when the day of the sale came. He was saddened as much by a knowledge of the fact that those he had trusted had been untrue to him as by the loss of his belongings. His plans for the future were vague and unformed. He was unfitted for anything but farming, and he did not wish to engage in any other occupation. He would, he said, 'begin over again,' but he did not know where or how he was to begin.

The day of the sale dawned clear and bright. There had rarely been a fairer day. The long piazza in front of the house was filled with furniture and all sorts of household articles soon to be scattered far and wide. The neighbors and strangers came in great numbers to the sale, and tramped heavily in and out of the dismantled rooms, some of them even peering into closets and drawers. They all agreed in this—that it was 'too bad'; but most of them added that Lyman Hart had 'brought it on himself.'

The sale began at 10 o'clock, when the house and farm were 'put up' by Ben Jarrold, the big auctioneer from the town five miles distant. He stood on the porch and read, in a strident voice, the order of the court for the sale of the property. Then he took off his coat and hat, pushed up his