

## Notes on Exchanges and Legal Scrap Book.

SOME CURIOUS PLEAS.—A man was once tried in Illinois for horse-stealing, upon evidence sufficiently conclusive to satisfy even his own counsel that conviction was inevitable. Still, that worthy was in no way daunted, but, rising for the defence, said he should not attempt to controvert the evidence before the court, but would put in a plea of matrimonial insanity. "Matrimonial insanity!" exclaimed Judge W——, mated, as everybody knew, to a most unamiable woman. "That is a novel defence; but let us hear the evidence." A witness was soon in the box who had known the prisoner for ten years, and deposed that in that time the delinquent had married half a dozen times and was living with his sixth wife when arrested. "Well," continued the witness, "if any of them was better than the others, I am not aware of it; they were all a sorry lot. They kept the man constantly in hot water by their peevish, scolding, quarrelsome dispositions." Other witnesses having confirmed this account of the prisoner's matrimonial mistakes, his counsel addressed the court, dilating upon the cunning way in which women drew men into matrimony, and the wondrous change that came over them when the victim was ensnared; finishing up by contending that his client could not be held a responsible agent after being galled by such Xantippes for ten years. This skilful "touch of nature" was sufficient for the judge, whose charge ended thus: "This court has had a certain amount of matrimonial experience with one female, and such experience has not been altogether of a satisfactory character. But here is a man who has been so blind, imbecile, and idiotic as to marry in ten years six horrible scolds and shrews. For so doing I class him as a natural fool; and even if he possessed any intelligence, the dwelling with these women must have destroyed it. The plea of the counsel for the defence is sound in law and equity, and I charge you to bring in a verdict of acquittal." The jury did as they were bid. A tax collector at Naples ran away with a large sum of public money, was caught, brought back, and put upon his trial. His counsel admitted the facts, but contended that the collector was one of the people, the money was the people's money, and it would be monstrous to convict a man of stealing what was his own; and the jury being of the same mind acquitted the thief. A barrister retained to defend an unhappy man charged with purloining a duck, found himself embarrassed in consequence of the rogue having exercised his invention over freely, and having volunteered several explanations of the matter. First, he said he did not steal the duck—he had found it; then he said somebody had given him the duck: then that his dog had picked it up; and lastly, that a malicious policeman had put the duck in his pocket unknown to him. Putting the case to the jury, his counsel left the gentlemen to take their choice, saying: "My unfortunate client has told half a dozen different stories as to how he became possessed of the duck. I don't ask you to believe all these stories, but I will ask you to take any one of them." Which story they took the advocate never knew, but the man got off. One plea, if it is a good one, is quite enough, and in certain