

**HORSEBACK RIDING IN MADEIRA.**—The Hon. John A. Dix, in his recent work, "A Winter in Madeira," gives an amusing account of horseback riding at Funchal. For thirty cents an hour a fine horse can be hired at any livery stable, together with a man as attendant, who follows on foot; and when you desire to ride fast, he catches hold of your horse's tail and is drawn along. In this way he prevents you from running away from him. Mr. Dix says that the horses soon become accustomed to the human appendages, and that the fellows have a way of making the horses go fast or slow, as they desire, in spite of the rider.—Mr. Dix says that for ladies this association of horse and driver is a great convenience. They need no other attendant. He is always ready to render any assistance; if the horse loses a shoe, he has a hammer and nails in his pocket to replace it. It is not easy to fancy a more ludicrous spectacle than a lady riding through the city at full gallop, with a man hanging to the tail of her horse; but such scenes are of hourly occurrence in Funchal, and the eye soon becomes accustomed to them.

**SWAPPING HORSES.**—Think twice before trading off a horse that has served you well on the whole, though he may have some fault. We have known men to swap off horses that had but one or two faults, for others that had a dozen. This generally arises from the bad temper of the owner. A horse refuses to draw before oxen, and he is put off for one that is not willing to draw anywhere. Another is high spirited, and the women can't drive him; he is put off for one that cannot be coaxed out of a walk. Another is not willing to be caught in the pasture; he is exchanged for one that is worthless when caught.

A low horse that hardly keeps your feet from the ground, is put off for one that you cannot mount without a block. A lazy horse is put off for one that has no patience to let you be seated in the chaise, before he must go.

On the whole, we would not advise farmers to think of changing off any of their stock for slight faults; whether cattle or horses, or children or wives. It is better to bear with them, than to run the risk of faults they know not of.—*Bloomington Herald.*

**THOMAS A BECKET, Archbishop of Canterbury,** was murdered before the altar of his own cathedral, 1171. He was made chancellor to Henry II. in 1158, and soon after elevated to the see of Canterbury; but he quarrelled with the king, was impeached, and his haughtiness and obstinacy finally led to his murder by four of the royal courtiers, though without their master's knowledge. The assassins fled, and to expiate their crimes, made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, where they died. The news of Becket's death alarmed the king, who not only expulcated himself before the pope, but performed penance at the shrine of the murdered priest, and not only passed the night on the cold pavement in penitence and prayer, but suffered himself to be scourged by the monks. The spot was visited by thousands with religious awe, and the shrine of Becket was adorned with whatever was most costly and rich in the kingdom. Becket was canonized by the Pope in 1172.

**TIME IS MONEY.**—When we change a dollar, the dimes and half dimes escape as things of small account;

when we break a day by idleness in the morning, the rest of the hours lose their importance in our eyes. As time recedes, eternity advances. It is solemn the thought, how prudent the advice:—Improve time, and prepare for eternity!

**BEST ROOMS.**—Among all the follies prevalent in the middle classes, that of sacrificing family comfort and convenience to the absurd desire of having a best room is one of the most ridiculous. Let it not be inferred that we consider good furniture, elegant curtains, and handsome carpets, as superfluous luxuries for people in plebeian state—far from it. Consistent taste and prudent display are to be as much admired in the house of a commoner as in the saloons of a nobleman; but when a room is set apart in a small domicile as the mere receptacle of company, and all in that room held sacred to tight ceremony and ostentatious pretensions, when chairs are cased in Holland jackets, and the carpet puts on its pinafore of the same material for months together, when the apartment is literally shut up,—indicating that family comfort lies dead within it,—then may the best rooms be condemned as worse than useless. For our own part, we think there is something perfectly terrifying in being asked into a stately drawing-room—the polished bars shining with unnatural brightness—the fire-irons arranged in stiff angles, evidently never appropriated to their purpose—the table most geometrically studded with glossy unread volumes of rubbish, and the bed silked and tabasselled sofas looking as if they were intended for anything but sitting on. We give an involuntary shudder as we are left to gaze on costly chimney ornaments and japanned screens, while the lady of the house is, most probably, making a rush to execute the metamorphosis of dress and cap. We would much rather have been introduced to the common parlor, where we should have beheld some signs of vitality, and thawed ourselves into a good-humored cheerfulness; but then and there we might have beheld a basket of stockings and socks undergoing the process of repair, the young ones might have been lugging the chairs about, and left a tailless horse and a wheelless cart in the foreground; we might have formed suspicions that bloaters have been among the matin condiments; and oh, most dire of all! we might have found the mistress in a somewhat rumpled morning wrapper, and a "fright of a cap." Still we should greatly prefer the risks of breaking our neck over Noah's ark, sitting down on a heap of undarrated hose, and encountering a fifth rate head gear, to the petrifying, spirit-damping fifteen minutes we are sentenced to sit in the "best room." The children, if there happen to be such humanizing things in the establishment, look on the walls with a sort of religious awe. They never "play" in the "best room," they never dream of clutching at the splendid bell-rope; they never have the most remote idea of making Lord Mayors' coaches of the embroidered foot-stools, and never think of playing at "bo-peep" behind the richly fringed damask drapery; they never dare to speculate as to whether, with a stout pin, they could pick out the eyes of the queer little man on the Indian card box; mischief and mischief are thoroughly mesmerized, and the little darlings sit or stand as though their life-tide had been suddenly manufactured into the "best starch."—And let us confess, that we experience no inconsiderable sense of misery ourselves in such a situation. It may be that a trace of gipsy blood is in our veins, or that some natural disqualification for "gentility," equally ignoble, marks us, but we are certainly never quite comfortable in a room that is only occupied on "grand occasions."—*Eliza Cook.*