

obsolete wealth which only passes current till the more sceptical, whose want of credulity renders them unpopular, revenge themselves by exposing the fraud and proving it counterfeit. Of course, many who have a large amount of this sort of trash in stock are not especially anxious to have their authorities impeached, and tacitly consent to believe what it might be extremely embarrassing to discredit. Here we may note that the difficulty referred to, of feeling the live pulse of past events, is most frequently overcome by a convenient, and, in fact, necessary twist about. That is, by turning the back on an immense amount of fruitless research, we hit upon the easy expedient of inverting the order of time,—making the earlier action take its character from the subsequent impression, and dovetail with still later periods. Then, virtually, the stint of divining any sentiment or motive pertaining to the antique, resolves itself not into an ancient but a modern inquiry, and is no longer a matter of how *they* felt, but what *we* think. Contemporaries and eye-witnesses are repudiated as incompetent evidence, and to get a proper knowledge of what transpired in the times past we must read what is written in times present. The consequence of such a chronological atrocity is to make all generations and epochs assimilate and amenable to our own, and in this manner we virtually ignore the equitable principle that times as well as circumstances alter cases.