

which can be sold for as many pounds as they cost shillings.

Curiously enough, this laxity was known to the ancients as well as to ourselves : for Roman coins have occasionally been dug up, some evidently plated, some as evidently washed over with a mere surface of precious metal. At the present time, the Greek islands shelter men who make false dies of ancient coins, as a preliminary to the manufacture of new specimens so doctored up as to pass for old. The trade must indeed be a lucrative one, if the statement is correct that one engraver of these false dies netted two or three thousand pounds from the pockets of Englishmen alone, who innocently purchased the counterfeits at high prices, under a belief in their genuine character. Old Roman coins require to be scanned closely, whenever a high price is asked for them ; it is said that almost every collector has some whose genuineness he doubts, although he has not tests sufficient to settle the matter clearly.

A numismatist, a few years ago, warned collectors to be on their guard concerning half groats and pennies of Richard III.'s reign ; there are but few of them in existence, and imitators have been tempted to enter this field ; the fraudulent specimens are well made, and put on that worn appearance which would be due to a great age.

Much could be said as to the sophistication or imitation of coins, which, on account of their age or rarity, command a market price much beyond their original value ; but the debasement or fraudulent imitation of the current coin has also for ages afforded a field for misapplied ingenuity.

An extant official document, relating to Wells in Somersetshire, describes a curious way of determining the legality and excellence of a current coin called a *teston*, of which there were two varieties, one just worth double the other. The fourpenny teston and the twopenny teston were current at the same time, and being of the same size, though differ-