

THE MIND AND MANNERS OF A FLORENTINE MERCHANT OF THE FOURTEENTH CEN- TURY

ALTHOUGH the exterior life of all classes in the present day seems very different from that of our early forefathers, it must, nevertheless, be admitted that the mental and moral progress has, so far, not corresponded with that achieved in material and outward things. For this reason, especially in all that concerns the acquiring of wealth, which is the fruit of egoism, the modern human mind differs not very largely from the minds of men dead centuries ago, and this fact will be the more apparent from the perusal of the following pages, wherein a Florentine merchant of the fourteenth century has left us the record of his mental, moral and material condition.

In the Riccardiana Library of Florence, that city not only of art and literature, but also of mediæval crafts and commerce, there is preserved a quaint "Book of Good Examples and Good Manners," written by a Florentine of the fourteenth century, and affording more than a passing glimpse into the lives of those early Italian merchants, when they had not yet made their fortunes, but were still labouring in their shops and warehouses, striving for the achievement of riches and nobility for their families, much in the same way, although