

we discover the striped hose and the purse of the merchant ; under the outward semblance of religious unction we recognise the furtive cunning of that native trickery which neither religion nor *examples* could succeed in restraining. That American merchant makes no pretences, because he belongs to a different age and a different race ; he knows no waverings between good and evil, for the simple reason that he looks only to the useful, into which either of the other qualities may enter with varying percentage. The fourteenth-century merchant wants to make a good profit, but he always keeps an eye on the safety of his soul, and his consequent uncertainties are easy to read between the lines of his counsels. Listen to the practical and crafty advice he offers in matters of business :

When thou hast need that another should render thee a service, go into his house, that is, into the house of the man from whom thou art going to ask the service, because he will not refuse thee in his own house as he would do outside.

If thou buyest a field or a vineyard, see that thou buyest a field that is small and good rather than one that is large and barren, because thou wilt always find labourers in the good field.

If thou dost dwell at thy country house, beware of consorting together with the labourers when they take their rest, because they do all drink and are heated with wine and have their weapons about them, wherefore do thou let them alone upon feast days. If thou hast aught to do with the labourers go unto them when they are working in the fields and thou shalt find them humble and meek, with the goodness of the plough, the spade and the hoe. If thou hast to reckon with them, never do it at thy country house but make them come into the city and there do thy reckoning ; because if thou dost it in the country all the other labourers will take the part of thy labourers against thee, and thou wilt not be able to prevent them getting the better of thee and always putting thee in the wrong.

When thou goest to dwell in a strange place, seek to have as many friends as thou canst, and especially a priest or friar of good and honest life, and a physician. Endeavour likewise to obtain the friendship of one or more of the great men of the place, not spending too much money upon them, however ; by doing them a little honour, thou, who art a stranger, will incline unto thee any courteous and wise man. See that thou causest such things as will please them to be brought from thine own city and give them unto them once or twice a year ; such things as a fine sword, or a fine knife, or bells for a falcon, or jesses or hoods, and similar things, or rings or belts, or bags or silken purses, which may be useful for him or for his wife or his children.