

'MANN' AND MANNERS

AT THE

COURT OF FLORENCE,

1740—1786.

*FOUNDED ON THE LETTERS OF HORACE MANN
TO HORACE WALPOLE.*

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who were all too well pleased with her saying what they all thought (but out of complaisance had concealed) to undeceive her as to the author ; but it was too late, she was vastly confused for some time, but had gone too far to retract. The only way to mitigate it, was to say that, indeed she had read it over hastily, and that perhaps on reading it again should alter her opinions ; but she never mentioned a word to him of it afterwards, and he, from being the greatest admirer of her judgement, wit, and understanding, had ever after the most contemptible opinion of them !'

From ruffled authors, our Minister proceeds to take note of man and beast. On March 13th, he says:— 'We have been entertained with a most shabby Tripoline Ambassador whom people's curiosity led to see as much as it will the Rhinoceros which we expect from Rome, where it is gone to the Jubilee. This animal is to be recommended to me with its master, Vander Meer, whom the Emperor has made a Baron for the merit of the Beast. You must not be surprised that a Baron de l'Empire should follow this trade, when we are told that Augustus himself did not disdain to be a Rhinocerontajo, by shewing one publickly to the Romans ; and this I believe is the only one that has been in Italy since that time though I have never heard that a medal of it was struck as has now been done in honour of this.

'The Tripoline Ambassador, as I have said, was followed by crowds whenever he stirred out, with which he was offended till Naziato Baldocci, the Master of the Ceremonies who attended him, told him it was to do him honour ; so they persuaded him when, on

his arrival at the gates of Bologna and pressing through the streets, the people gave him a *solennissima fischiata* (a most solemn hissing and whistling) with which mark of their respect he was taught to be greatly pleased, and bristled his whiskers with joy.'

April 17th.—' We have now a Mr. Scrim here, the son of the great Apothecary of Bath, who is by much the finest and most delicate man here; he has the finest cloaths, always wears lace, has a fine equipage and gives great dinners. At one of these to many English, on every salver that was presented when people called for drink, there were two Caraffes; one with Burgundy, with a printed lay bill pasted on it, was taken up by one of the company, who said aloud that it looked like a dose from an Apothecary's shop, and he hoped it wasn't Physick, which he accompanied by putting it to his nose. He afterwards protested that he did not do it on purpose, and indeed he was as much disconcerted as now Mr. Schrim (*sic.* Query Skreane?) appeared to be. It cured him ever after of giving Burgundy in caraffes.'

May 8th.—' Madame Don Philip has brought the mode into Italy of dressing her head à la Rhinoceros, which all our ladies here follow; so that the preceding mode à la Commetta (*sic.*) is only fit for Madame Suares and such antiquated beauties. . . . I have been a regular Courtier to the Marquis of Baden Durlach. . . . The late Queen' (Caroline, wife of George II.) 'was his great aunt, and he is nephew to the Prince of Orange. . . . Count Richecourt, observing that he hardly ever opens his mouth but to speak English, has engaged us in all his parties, and