

SIR HORACE MANN

I

SIR ROBERT WALPOLE was accused of employing 'low people with parts' in public service,¹ and it is true that many English diplomatists of his day were of middle-class origin. Among them was Sir Horace Mann, the English representative in Tuscany. Mann had 'parts' (though they were chiefly social), and he was painfully aware that his paternal ancestry, though hardly 'low' was not distinguished.

His grandfather, John Mann, 'spent' a small estate that had been long in the family,² leaving his descendants to depend upon their cousins the Walpoles (John's maternal grandmother, Mrs Alston, was a sister of Mrs Burwell, Sir Robert Walpole's great-grandmother).³ When John Mann's son, Robert, came to London, his chief protector was Sir Robert Walpole, who got him contracts for army forage and positions in Chelsea Hospital and the customs, thus enabling him to buy the estate of Capell's Court in the Weald of Kent, where as squire he began to build a splendid new house called Linton.⁴

Neither Robert Mann's modest Suffolk origins, nor the lands in which he sank his trading profits, could entitle his son to vie with ancient Florentine families, but Robert's wife, Eleanor Guise, came of stock which afforded more satisfaction to her son Horace—who even thought of changing his name to Guise. Though Horace was their most illustrious son, Robert and Eleanor had at least five others, besides three daughters. Their first-born, Edward Louisa Mann, was a bachelor who fathered two broods of illegitimate children, and cheated his subordinates

1. *Post* 24 Nov. 1747 OS.

2. *Post* 25 July 1749 NS.

3. J. J. Muskett, *Suffolk Manorial Families*, Exeter, 1900-14, iii. 80b; W. A. Copinger, *Manors of Suffolk*, London and Manchester, 1905-11, vi. 322-3.

4. Edward Hasted, *History . . . of Kent*, 2d edn, Canterbury, 1797-1801, iv. 368; Christopher Hussey, 'Linton Park,' *Country Life*, 1946, xcix. 578-80; *Genealogical Magazine*, 1898-9, ii. 319, n. 1; Winston Churchill, *Marlborough*, 1933-8, iv. 521; *post* 21 May 1740 NS, n. 9.