your writing. I wrote you a strange long letter by the last post through Holland the 11th inst. I will suppose they all arrive safe without the least marks of violence; the last I want an answer to extremely. I have been writing a long letter to my father, though I dare not flatter myself it will produce the effect I plead for, as his absolute will takes place of all justice and reason and I do not at all doubt but his notions of a parent's natural authority to use his children as he pleases will make him conclude that all remonstrances are impertinent.—But I won't tire you on this disagreeable subject. I won't promise however that I shall be able to avoid it merely *per isfogo*[1] when I see my letter to him produces no effect, or perhaps an abusive answer.

The weather has been so bad that I have not been out this whole week. The excessive rains had almost occasioned an inundation of the Arno, but we were cased from the apprehensions at the end of twelve hours. The water rose even with the side walls, and filled some cellars, but did no other damage, as people had time to move their effects. The great rains in Lombardy and the state of Bologna have, it seems, washed away all the Austrians and Spaniards for we hear no more talk of them, and yet we are making preparations for the remainder of the troops to march toward the confines as if they were mighty formidable. The Great Duke has sent his absolute orders to General Braitwitz to march[2] and a strong *miramur*[3] that he had not done it before; so that in blind obedience to his orders which he supposes were penned by 58 [*Richecourt*] he sets out for Firenzuola[4] in a day or two and will have with him, if his men choose to stay, about 3,500. The rest are quartered in different places on the mountains equally advantageous to desert from. Most people disapprove of these motions[5] but to tell you a violent secret[6] and which must be kept so, 14 [*the army*] *de* 49 [*the Queen of Hungary*] is to do his best against 168 [*the Spaniards*] without loss of time, when it is apprehended 42 [*Tuscany*] might be exposed, which all this is to hinder.[7] Prince

1. 'Per sfogo': 'to let off steam.'

2. 'To march . . . and to post himself so as to prevent the Spaniards entering into Tuscany at all events' (Mann to Newcastle 18 Dec. NS, S.P. 98/45 f. 273).

3. 'We are astonished': evidently an expression used to express disapproval in Latin diplomatic correspondence.

4. To set up his headquarters (S.P. 98/45 f. 273).

5. Because of the probability of large-scale desertions (ibid., f. 273).

6. Orders to Traun to attack the Spaniards, and 'not defer doing it' (ibid. ff. 273–4). The entire section of Mann's dispatch dealing with this subject is in cipher.

7. This plan was discarded (*post* 1 Jan. 1743 NS).