younger sons! Nay, elder sons must hate him too: they used to think profusion was to descend only like titles in the right line. My thoughts naturally revert to that right line. My poor nephew, I hope, is sinking into imbecility, but the passage is dreadful. For above eight weeks he has been furious, and disposed to be to the last degree mischievous. The physicians declare him absolutely incurable, and never fit to go abroad more—yet I can have no peace till I shall cease to tremble for his life by his growing childish. From his mother I have not had a word, nor expect it yet. My letter, I conclude, will be well pondered, and probably sent over first to her counsel[3] here. I cannot help it. Delays are added to all my other vexations, and all must be borne. Indeed I ought not to blame Lady O. yet, for she is at Naples, and I have not heard, though I wrote on the 4th of last month, that you yourself have yet received my letter with that enclosed for her. I do not know whence this procrastination proceeds, but formerly I used to receive an answer from you in a month, and since I have had more cause for observation by the importance of my nephew's affairs, I have remarked that the expedition is much less—I do not guess why, for who can have any interest in knowing or retarding such melancholy affairs—if my unhappy connection higher is the cause, no curiosity can be gratified, for I neither know nor can communicate any secrets. I adhere strictly to the line I prescribed to myself of behaving respectfully, ceremoniously, and silently in a case that I could not prevent. My business occupies my whole time—I have none for politics public or private. My health declines, and so do my animal spirits, as I am sensible my letters show you. My amusements are at end, for I have no leisure for them; and therefore whatever curiosity intercepts our correspondence, it will be gratified with no entertainment. I am sorry for your sake that it is grown so dull, I will not say uninteresting, for whatever touches me so nearly, is not indifferent to you. When I revive, or the world is more animated, you will know it, for the lifelessness is not all my own; I am apt enough to be infected with the temper of the times, though but a distant spectator—but I will have done accounting for having nothing to say, which the account itself proves. You have seen me a Proteus in temper; you now find that Proteus's decline is like that of other old folks.

3. Joshua Sharpe.