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of the honesty of his son's intentions. There is a half in-  
sane tone about his letter to Mr. Baker, but a certain meth-  
od may be discerned in its incoherencies. My own read-  
ing of it is that it was a clever evasion of his son-in-law's  
attempts to make sure of his share of the inheritance. We  
have seen how shifty Defoe was in the original bargaining  
about his daughter's portion, and we know from his novels  
what his views were about fortune-hunters, and with what  
delight he dwelt upon the arts of outwitting them. He  
probably considered that his youngest daughter was suffi-  
ciently provided for by her marriage, and he had set his  
heart upon making provision for her unmarried sisters.  
The letter seems to me to be evidence, not so much of  
fears for their future welfare, as of a resolution to leave  
them as much as he could. Two little circumstances seem  
to show that, in spite of his professions of affection, there  
was a coolness between Defoe and his son-in-law. He  
wrote only the prospectus and the first article for Baker's  
paper, the *Universal Spectator*, and when he died, Baker  
contented himself with a simple intimation of the fact.

If my reading of this letter is right, it might stand as a  
type of the most strongly marked characteristic in Defoe's  
political writings. It was a masterly and utterly unscrupu-  
lous piece of diplomacy for the attainment of a just and  
benevolent end. This may appear strange after what I  
have said about Defoe's want of honesty, yet one cannot  
help coming to this conclusion in looking back at his polit-  
ical career before his character underwent its final degrada-  
tion. He was a great, a truly great liar, perhaps the great-  
est liar that ever lived. His dishonesty went too deep to  
be called superficial, yet, if we go deeper still in his rich  
and strangely mixed nature, we come upon stubborn founda-  
tions of conscience. Among contemporary comments on