

services or acknowledgments that are due to him. His ignorance of the benefactor might alleviate the charge of ingratitude ; but it plainly awakens the charge again, if he choose to remain in ignorance, and would shun the information that might dispel it. In reference then to this still undiscovered patron of his family, it is possible for him to evince ingratitude ; to make full exhibition of a nature that is unmoved by kindness and withholds the moral responses which are due to it, that can riot with utmost selfishness and satisfaction upon the gifts while in total indifference about the giver—an indifference which might be quite as clearly and characteristically shown, by the man who seeks not after his unknown friend, as by the man who slights him after that he has found him.

12. And further this ingratitude admits of degrees. It may exist even in a state of total uncertainty as to the object of it ; and without the smallest clue to the discovery of him. But should some such clue be put into his hand, and he forbear the prosecution of it—this would enhance the ingratitude. It were an aggravation of his baseness if there cast up some opening to a discovery, and he declined to follow it—if the probability fell in his way that might have guided him to the unseen hand which had been stretched forth in his behalf, and he shut his eyes against it—if he, satisfied with the bounty, were not merely content to live without the slightest notice of the benefactor, but lived in utter disregard of every notice that transpired upon the subject—loving the darkness rather than the light upon this question, and better pleased to