

the descendants of Judas Iscariot who betrayed his Lord with a kiss. We notice in the next place.

II.—THE CONSEQUENCES OF TALE-BEARING.

These are many and manifold. Families divided, friendships broken, neighbours set at variance, and a whole community upset. In a small place, one tale-bearer is sufficient to set everyone by the ears, and sow suspicion in every heart. Friends grow cool, characters are ruined, and mutual distrust takes the place of confidence. It often takes years of patient and holy living to live down a foul scandal. And even then the echo of it will not only follow an innocent man to his grave, but be heard after his death. In fact, a tale-bearer is *worse than a thief*, for the latter steals what can be replaced, but who can replace a destroyed reputation?

Good name in man and woman
Is the immediate jewel of their souls,
Who steals my purse steals trash; 'tis something, nothing:
'Twas mine, 'tis his, and has been slave to thousands.
But he that filches from me my good name
Robs me of that which not enriches him,
And makes me poor indeed.

There is one consolation, however, *the tale-bearer is punished*. Sooner or later he is bound to be discovered, and then woe to him; he is avoided like the plague as soon as he appears; conversation ceases—the cry, “Mr. Telltale is coming,” is enough to seal every lip. Everyone feels as David: “I will keep my mouth with a bridle while the wicked is before me.” Just as when thieves are about, we lock our doors and make our windows fast, so when these thieves of reputation are near, we protect ourselves by the precaution of silence, as they have sown distrust, so now they gather the same, they have sown the whirlwind, and they reap the storm, “so shall they make their own tongue fall upon themselves, all that see them shall flee away.”—We notice next

III.—THE CAUSES OF TALE-BEARING.

On the part of the tale-bearer they are:—

(a) *Ignorance*.—A scandal-monger is seldom an educated person, and having no store of information laid upon his memory, he is compelled to make gossip the staple of his talk, and if an excuse be possible for him we can say, “poor fellow, he knows no better.”

(b) *Envy* is another cause. The tale-bearer is jealous, he cannot bear to see others above him, it is gall and wormwood to hear others praised, so he slanders where he cannot equal. We are told of a savage