

ROSE-BELFORD'S
CANADIAN MONTHLY
AND NATIONAL REVIEW.

JUNE, 1879.

THE FALLEN LEAVES.

BY WILKIE COLLINS.

CHAPTER IX.

AMELIUS rose impulsively from his chair.

Mrs. Farnaby turned at the same moment, and signed to him to resume his seat. 'You have given me your promise,' she whispered. 'All I ask of you is to be silent.' She softly drew the key out of the door, and showed it to him. 'You can't get out,' she said—'unless you take the key from me by force!'

Whatever Amelius might think of the situation in which he now found himself, the one thing that he could honourably do was to say nothing, and submit to it. He remained quietly by the fire. No imaginable consideration (he mentally resolved) should induce him to consent to a second confidential interview in Mrs. Farnaby's room.

The servant opened the house-door. Regina's voice was heard in the hall.

'Has my aunt come in?'

'No, miss.'

'Have you heard nothing of her?'

'Nothing, miss.'

'Has Mr. Goldenheart been here?'

'No, miss.'

'Very extraordinary! What can have become of them, Cecilia?'

The voice of the other lady was heard in answer. 'We have probably missed them on leaving the concert-room. Don't alarm yourself, Regina. I must go back, under any circumstances; the carriage will be waiting for me. If I see anything of your aunt, I will say you are expecting her at home.'

'One moment, Cecilia! (Thomas, you needn't wait.) Is it really true that you don't like Mr. Goldenheart?'

'What! has it come to that, already? I'll try to like him, Regina. Good-bye again!'

The closing of the street-door told that the ladies had separated. The sound was followed, in another moment, by the opening and closing of the dining-room door. Mrs. Farnaby returned to her chair at the fire-place.