

little hands, and growing wistful in the eyes, all on account of an idle scamp like myself, for whom she has no natural responsibility, I am visited with compunction. Moreover, I thought it possible that I could pass the time in the position suggested with some tolerable amusement. Therefore I said:

"My dear sister, if in six months' time no unforeseen obstacle has arisen, and Sir Jacob invites me, hang me if I don't go with Sir Jacob!"

"O Rudolf, how good of you! I am glad!"

"Where's he going to?"

"He doesn't know yet; but it's sure to be a good embassy."

"Madame," said I, "for your sake I'll go if it's no more than a beggarly legation. When I do a thing I don't do it by halves."

My promise, then, was given; but six months are six months, and seem an eternity, and inasmuch as they stretched between me and my prospective industry (I suppose *attachés* are industrious; but I know not, for I never became *attaché* to Sir Jacob or to anybody else) I cast about for some desirable mode of spending them. And it occurred to me