

rejected thee, thou hadst the baseness to take a *single loaf of bread*!! Fie, fie, thou art not worthy of the benefits of our social system. To prison with her!

"Yes," said the poor woman, with a vehemence of which I should not have supposed her capable; "yes, Sir, I took a loaf; but it was not for myself. What would it signify if I died!—life has little attraction for one who is always suffering. Yes, Sir, I did take—nay, why should I soften the expression—I did *steal* a loaf; and I would do it again in the same holy cause: I had no other means of saving the life of my poor child!"—And for the first time she wept. Hers were tears of bitterness. Until now, she had seemed plunged in a kind of stupid insensibility; and it requires the associations which the words she uttered had aroused within her, to bring her to a consciousness of her situation.

"I will visit her dwelling," said I to myself; and in a few minutes I had the most heart-rending spectacle before my eyes. The child, about five years of age, lay stretched upon a few handfuls of straw, which constituted the only furniture of the place, and scarcely gave signs of life. Its dreadful emaciation told the tale of its sufferings; and it was a tale that chilled my blood. "Make haste," said I to the inspector, "and fetch a bottle of wine and a pound of sugar, for there is not a moment to be lost, if we would save the child's life." The poor mother began to sob. She thanked me in the most affecting terms—pressed my hands—and I could perceive that it was with difficulty she refrained from throwing her arms round my neck. What a moment! how my heart dilated! It had been so contracted, and so full of gall and bitterness, ever since I entered into public life.

"What is the amount of your loss?" said I to the baker, who had accompanied us.

"Why Sir.....this is perhaps not the first time....."

"Well, ask what you like, and you shall have it."

The baker's self-love was aroused at this proposal, and he would take nothing.

"Then you will not prosecute?"

"No, your worship."

"My good woman, you are free. Here are five francs—go and put on the *pot au feu*; and do not blush to receive this trifle; you shall return it when you are able."

"Oh, Sir, may God bless you!" Joy and emotion had ex-