

Just then a couple of boys ran across the square. One of them stumbled over my feet, picked himself up quickly and ran on again. Two or three people now came, all running. De Kock jumped up.

"Something is happening," he said, "and with a vengeance too I fancy. Hark!"

The people now came fast and furious through the square, increasing in numbers every moment, but through the bustle and hurry and clatter of tongues, we could hear a woman's voice screaming in evident distress. Mingled with it was another sound which may have mystified the general crowd, but which De Kock and I could easily place.

"It is the parrot!" I exclaimed, as we started to run.

"You have your wish, *mon cher*, is it not so? But take it not so fast; we will be there in time. *Ciel!* what a row!"

The steps leading up to the restaurant were thronged with people, including two or three policemen. The dining-room was ablaze with light, and still full of visitors, most of whom, however, were moving about in a state of agitation. The upper windows were also lighted and wide open. The screaming suddenly ceased, but not the parrot.

"For goodness sake don't say I told you!" it went on, louder than ever, over and over again.

"Damn the bird!" exclaimed De Kock. "Policeman excuse me, but I am rather at home here. Let me go up, will you?"

"It looks bad, sir. I'd better keep behind."

"Oh. It isn't murder or anything of that sort. I know them, pretty couple, they are!"

The next moment we were in a kind of sitting room over the restaurant proper. Madame Martinetti lay as if exhausted on a sofa while the highly excited parrot sang and screamed and tore at its cage as if for life. Giuseppe was nowhere visible. "Now then where's the other?" demanded the policeman who had just entered behind us, "There's always two at this business. Show him up, now." But Madame at first would deign no explanation, Presently on the entry of policeman No. 2 she admitted there had been a quarrel. Yes, she had quarrelled with her dear Giuseppe, (the officers grinned) and had driven him away. Yes, he had gone—gone forever, he had said so, never to come back, never, never!