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THE COURIER OF THE CZAR

By Jules Verne

[CONTINUED.]

While by his advice the emir attempted twice to take the town at the price of a great sacrifice of men. He threw the soldiers against the earthworks which seemed to present some weak points, but the two assaults were repelled with the greatest courage. The grand duke and his officers did not spare themselves on that occasion.

Then, turning to the head of the police, he asked him: "Have you nothing to say to me?" "I have to place before your highness," said the head of the police, "a petition which has been addressed to you."

"By whom?" "By the exiles of Siberia, who, as your highness knows, are to the number of 500 in this city."

"What do the exiles ask for?" said the grand duke. "They ask your highness' permission," answered the head of the police, "to form a special corps and to lead the sortie."

"Yes," said the grand duke, with an emotion which he did not seek to conceal, "these exiles are Russians, and it is indeed their right to fight for their country."

"I can assure your highness," said the governor general, "that we have no better soldiers."

"But they must have a leader," said the grand duke. "Who shall he be?" "Would your highness like to have one?" said the head of the police "who has distinguished himself on many occasions?"

answered the grand duke. "Nevertheless let us be prepared for every emergency."

"Ten o'clock had just struck. The grand duke was about to dismiss his officers and retire to his apartments when a kind of uproar was heard outside the palace."

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