

an appraising eye. Out of the corner of the same eye he explored the region beyond the group that now clustered about the hostess. Evidently he discovered what he was looking for. Leaving the Baron high and dry, he skirted the edge of the group and, with beaming face, came to Lady Jane.

"My family is of Vienna," the Baron was saying to the Marchioness, "but of late years I have called Constantinople my home."

"I understand," said she gently. She asked no other question, but, favouring him with a kindly smile, turned her attention to the men who lurked insignificantly in the shadow of his vast bulk.

The Prince was a pale, dreamy young man with flowing black hair that must have been a constant menace to his vision, judging by the frequent and graceful sweep of his long, slender hand in brushing the encroaching forelock from his eyes, over which it spread briefly in the nature of a veil. He had the fingers of a musician, the bearing of a violinist. His head drooped slightly toward his left shoulder, which was always raised a trifle above the level of the right. And there was in his soft brown eyes the faraway look of the detached. The insignia of his house hung suspended by a red ribbon in the centre of his white shirt front, while on the lapel of his coat reposed the emblem of the Order of the Golden Star. He was a Pole.

Count Von Blitzen, a fair-haired, pink-skinned German, urged himself forward with typical, not-to-be-denied arrogance, and crushed the fingers of the Marchioness in his fat hand. His broad face beamed with an all-enveloping smile.