

middle-aged sisters, with faces like pippins under their coifs, were polishing the pews with vigour, tidying prayer books and hymnals on the ledges and banging the dust out of hassocks.

* * * *

We were storming and bucketing through the land of Canaan. Rows of beehives, brought up for the summer, were aligned by the edge of the woods. The slopes were striped with vines and scattered with sheaves and ricks, and chaff from threshing mingled with the dust. Flocks and herds were beginning to throw longer shadows when we reached a high point with an entire town spread below; and, getting out under the walls of a vigilant eighteenth-century citadel, we gazed across an untidy fall of roofs. At the bottom bridges spanned a river-bend to an older part of the city the other side. It was Cluj to the Rumanians, Klausenburg to the early Saxon settlers who founded or re-founded it, but, inexpugnably and immutably to the Hungarians, Kolozsvár.* Dropping towards the watershed, the sun filled the place with evening light and kindled the windows and the western flanks of cupolas and steeples and many belfries, darkening the eastern walls with shadow; and as we gazed, one of them began to strike the hour and another took up the challenge, followed by a third and soon enormous tonnages of sectarian bronze were tolling their ancient rivalries into the dusk. Even the Armenians, who had settled here a couple of centuries ago, sent out a chime and only the synagogues were silent.

As we climbed back into the motor-car, a swarm of small Gypsies rushed on us from caves and shanties, crowded on the running board and the bonnet and entangled us in cries and supplication and a mesh of arms like brown tendrils, which we could only unloose by flinging coins beyond their heads like confetti. Set free in a second, the car slid downhill and across one of the bridges and into the old city.

* * * *

Our journey was a secret. The town wasn't as perilous as it would

* The Rumanian name has been lengthened in recent time by hyphenation with the ancient name of Napoca, which is how the Dacians styled their home. The 'zs' of Kolozsvár is a French 'j'.