

have been in the winter season, with its parties and theatres and the opera in full blast, but we weren't supposed to be there, Angéla least of all. István revelled in the clandestine atmosphere and so did we; it gave a stimulating, comic-opera touch to our journey; so we left the conspicuous motor outside our quarters and stole about the town like footpads. István went ahead and peered round corners for fear of bumping into acquaintances; and, sure enough, he suddenly whispered, "About turn!" and shepherded us into an ironmonger's and colour-man's shop where, backs to the door, we stooped intently over a selection of mousetraps until the danger was past. It was someone he had been at school with in Vienna.

The old city was full of town-houses and palaces, most of them empty now, with their owners away for the harvest. Thanks to this, István had telephoned and borrowed a set of handsome vaulted rooms in one of them, not far from the house where Matthias Corvinus was born.

There was much evidence of his reign. In the great market square, a magnificent equestrian statue showed the king in full armour, surrounded by his knights and commanders, while armfuls of crescented and horse-tailed banners were piled as trophies at his feet. Only *Matthias Rex* was incised on the plinth—no need of *Hungariae* when it was set up—and Rumanians as well as Hungarians could rightly feel pride of kinship. Most of the names associated with the place were straight out of the novels of Jókai, and we had a quick look at the baroque arcades and books and treasures in the splendid Bánffy palace. I wonder whether I am right in remembering that Liszt gave recitals there? I think *Don Giovanni* was sung in Hungarian in the triple-named city even earlier than in Budapest. We entered the great Catholic church of St. Michael—a Gothic building which had looked enormous from the citadel—just as everyone was streaming out from Vespers, and the dusk indoors, lit only by flickering racks of tapers, looked vaster still, and umbrageously splendid; the clustered piers of the nave soared with no hindering capitals to halt the upward flight of the eye, then tilted over to join each other, form lancets and lose themselves in a brackeny network of liernes and groined vaulting and shadow.

An hotel at the end of the main square, called the New York—a great meeting place in the winter season—drew my companions like