

# A chat about the lakes of Thun and Brienz

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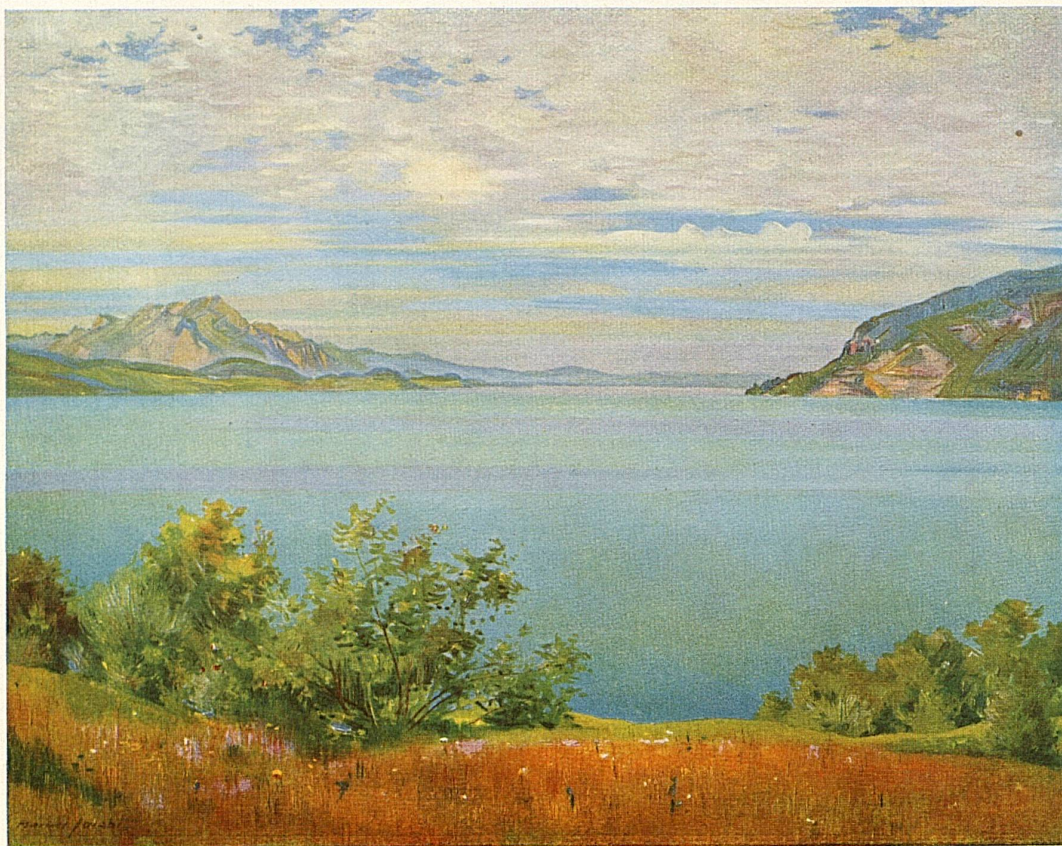
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*The Lake of Thun, near Leissigen*  
*An Oil-painting by M. Jacobi, Merligen*

## A CHAT ABOUT THE LAKES OF THUN AND BRIENZ

Two attractive lakes lie like twins in the very heart of Switzerland. Both are fed by the waters of the Aare as it hastens North from the Grimsel to join the Rhine near Rheinfeld. But they are very unlike in every way. The lake of Thun is gay and cosmopolitan; the lake of Brienz is quiet and essentially Swiss. The Wood-carving for which the Swiss are famous finds its centre at Brienz, and the dwellers in a neighbouring village manufacture fireworks. On the opposite shore within woods and bright with flowers nestles the little resort of Iseltwald far from the maddening crowd. No train disturbs its quiet! The lake steamers bear its visitors from and to Brienz or Interlaken.

A few miles off, high on the perpendicular cliffs which bound the lake, and framed in dark green foliage are the seven romantic cascades which form the famous Giessbach Falls, not far short of a thousand feet in height. There are many inns, clean and comfortable on both sides of the lake, and the rack and pinion line up the Brienzer Rothorn (7,700 ft.) has lately been

reopened, and affords a picturesque and extensive panorama.

But the pride of Canton Berne is the Lake of Thun. The hospitable Swiss, who are all the time exercising their ingenuity to plan some addition to the convenience of their visitors, have brought the waters of the lake right down to the station gates, so that one can step, as it were, from the train to the boat alongside. But spare an hour for the old town itself. The narrow High Street is the cutest thing of the sort you ever saw. Along its elevated sidewalks you can buy specimens of the pretty Thun pottery. At one end a grand old Castle rears its towers, at the other a short ascent leads to the little Church in the shadiest of wooded gardens commanding a clear view of the lake for miles. Near the head of the lake rises the sombre Stockhorn with its satellites, stopping short at Wimmis, where an ancient fortress guarded once the entrance to the beautiful Simmental.

Halfway up the lake towers the pyramid of the





*Peter's Isle, on the Lake of Biel*  
An Oil-painting by M. Jacobi, Merligen

Niesen, which dominates the whole scene, and is veritably the Lady of the lake. A convenient train carries the tourist to the very top to enjoy the view.

Almost at the foot of the Niesen is Spiez, the chief tourist centre of the district. Its roads wind steeply down to a little bay on the lake, where a very fine plage has lately been formed for bathing and even sun-baths. Interlaken and the Lütschental, the Kiental, Kandersteg and the Lötschberg, the Simmental, &c. are all within easy reach by train or car. Delightfully situated on the hills behind is Aeschi, where are several hotels of the less expensive order but very comfortable; and from there an interesting excursion may be made to the Morgenberghorn. One can wander along the heights above the lake, pass a night in a peasant's chalet and after lavish potations of hot milk make the ascent and return through the Suldtal.

On the opposite shore to Spiez and two thousand feet or thereabouts above the lake is Beatenberg, the longest village in Switzerland! The view of the Alps across the lake is admirable. Behind the lesser mountains of the immediate foreground, there stretches the whole range of the Bernese Alps from the Schreckhorn to the Blumlisalp and the Wildhorn. Various climbs tempt the more venturesome, while a pleasant day may be spent in a walk up the Juststal, and a search for botanical treasures. From nowhere else does the water of the lake shine with such a brilliant

emerald lustre, nor the Alpine glow tint the cliffs a deeper crimson.

The early morning is the hour to visit the lake. Very beautiful then is the view as the steamer leaves Thun. Facing one on the right is the whole extent of the Blumlisalp, its three peaks and wide stretch of snow with outcrops of rock, and beyond it the crest of the Doldenhorn looks over the shoulder of the Niesen. On the left or Northern shore of the lake right from Thun to Merligen, village succeeds to village. The gardens are gay with blossoms which hang over the walls to see their own reflection in the water. The green slopes behind are thickly dotted with chalets. The graceful spire of the Church on the hillside at Hilterfingen and the curious castle, built half in the water, at Oberhofen stand out as attractive features in the landscape, together with the shady grounds of Gunten's popular hotels.

The evening has also a charm of its own. I can recall the vivid clearness with which at the close of a showery day the sun lit up the details of the mountains and their many ravines. And how to complete the scene, a rainbow spanned the lake like a many hued arch from side to side. I was never so near the Rainbow's end! Certain it is, that old and young will meet a welcome and find satisfaction according to their tastes, when they pay a visit to the Lakes of Thun and Brienz.

A. B. Winter.