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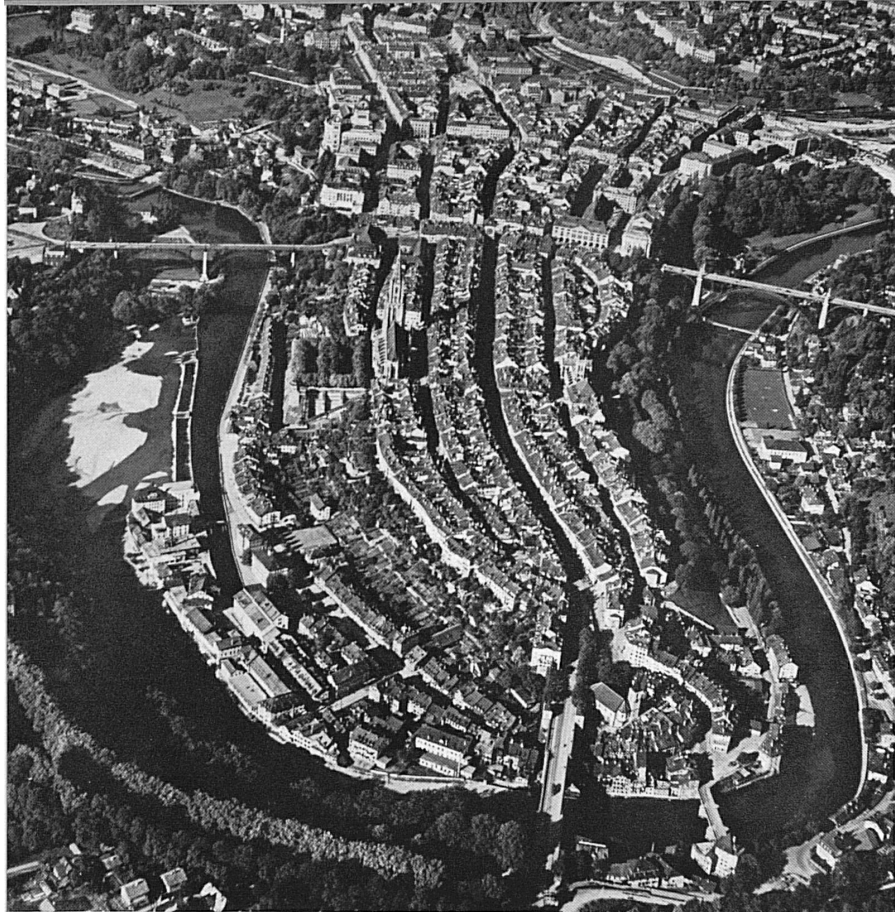
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Left: Old Bern from the air. — A gauche: Le vieux Bern à vol d'oiseau — Links: Das alte Bern vom Flugzeug aus  
Below: The Moses Fountain and Minster Spire — En bas: La fontaine de Moïse et la Tour de la Cathédrale — Unten: Mosesbrunnen und Münsterturn

# BERNE

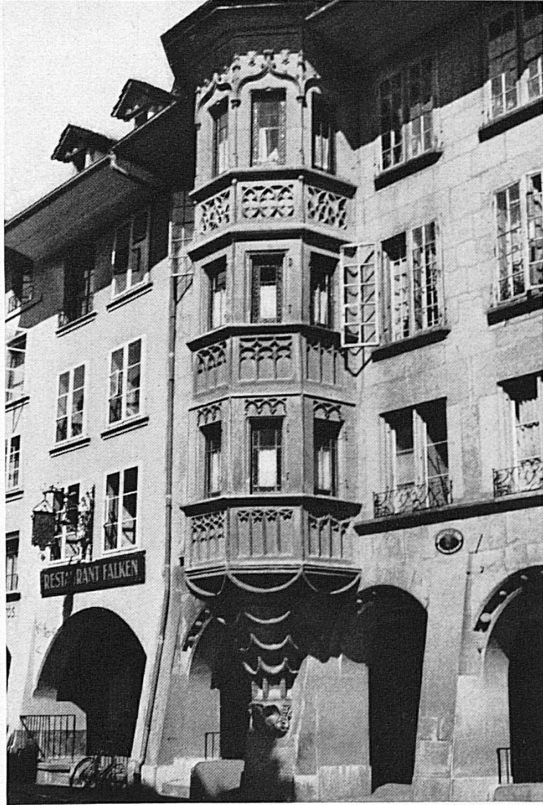
Impossible to imagine this ancient City of the Zæhringen separated from its proper setting. It is rooted in the landscape, has spread and grown in the course of centuries by phases of evolution which, together with the original core, are still quite apparent even in their harmonious blending. Just as the purposeful simplicity of any instrument in its rudimentary form is beautiful, so, too, is the structure of this township. It would be a fallacy to regard it from a purely æsthetic point of view and to judge it solely in this light, for Bern was laid out primarily for the protection of its burghers from assault. Flanked on three sides by the deep



valley of the Aare, the city stands securely upon its rocky peninsula. Two gates, the Zeitglocken Tower with its famous carillon, and the Käfig Tower, mark the limits of the most ancient epochs in the seven hundred years of the city's history. Narrow, winding streets seem to flow to the melody of the river below, and their quaint harmony is enhanced by the architecture of the wide-eaved houses looking out upon them. Each house has character and personality, yet all are true to the same pure type and fused into a single entity by the grand old arcades that run the length of the streets with the symmetry and rhythm of petrified waves. Even where wealth accumulated in foreign countries was converted into the grand mansions of their time, there was no discordant deviation from type.

Berne is not a town for the hustler. Like Fribourg, its elder sister across the Saane, it must be explored at leisure to be fully appreciated. An excursion through the hilly countryside round about brings to light a wealth of charming discoveries — country houses, modelled upon those to be found amid the spreading fields of France, hidden deep in the verdure of their fine old gardens; 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century castles with old-world fountains playing beneath the trees.





Berne itself is the city of fountains. The citizens of long ago may have foregone their right to self-expression so far as the façades of their houses were concerned; instead they built those colourful fountains right in the middle of the roadway as decorative symbols of unity. Quaint masterpieces of ancient stonecutters' art, these, culminating in the splendid portal of the Minster. The Minster itself is a fine specimen of the Late Gothic.

Thus the architecture of many epochs blends into rare harmony. Even though modern requirements have led to the destruction of many an irreplaceable charm, the intrinsic beauty of the town as a whole is permanently protected by the very nature of its setting. Ks.



Top, left to right: Some of Berne's most ancient houses; Bay-windowed house in the Kesslergasse; Fountain of a Bernese country house — En haut, de gauche à droite: Maisons de la vieille ville; arcades typiques et fenêtres en encorbellement de la Kesslergasse; Fontaine d'un manoir bernois. Oben von links nach rechts: Häuser im ältesten Bern; Erkerhaus an der Kesslergasse; Brunnen in einem bernischen Landsitz. Insets, left: Fool's Mask supporting bay-window (Kesslergasse); Right: The municipal coat-of-arms. Vignettes, à gauche: Cul de lampe à la Kesslergasse; A droite: L'écusson de la ville — Vignettes: Links: Narrenmaske als Erkerträger (Kesslergasse); Rechts: Das Wappen der Stadt. Below: The Wise Virgins, Minster portal; Across the roofs of Berne — En bas: Les vierges sages au portail de la cathédrale de Berne; Coup d'œil sur les toits — Unten: Die klugen Jungfrauen am Münsterportal; Blick über die Dächer

Text und Photos Kasser

