

# Davos in der Encyclopedia Britannica des Jahres 1911

Davos (Romansch Tavau, a name variously explained as meaning a sheep pasture or simply «behind»), a mountain valley in the Swiss canton of the Grisons, lying east of Coire (whence it

much frequented in winter by consumptive patients, as its position, sheltered from cold winds and exposed to brilliant sunshine in the daytime, has a most beneficial effect on invalids in the

We first hear of Tavaus or Tavauns in 1160 and 1213, as a mountain pasture or «alp». It was then in the hands of a Romansch-speaking population, as is shown by many surviving field names.



is 40 m. distant by rail), and north-west of the Lower Engadine (accessible at Siis in 18 m. by road). It contains two main villages, 2 m. from each other, Dorfli and Platz (the chief hamlet), which are 5015 ft. above the sea-level, and had a population in 1900 of 8089, a figure exceeded in the Grisons only by the capital Coire. Of the population 5391 were Protestants, 2564 Romanists, and 81 Jews; while 6048 were German-speaking and 486 Romansch-speaking. In 1860 the population was only 1705, rising to 2002 in 1870, to 2865 in 1880, to 3891 in 1888, and to 8089 in 1890. This steady increase is due to the fact that the valley is now

first stages of that terrible disease. A local doctor, by name Spengler, first noticed this fact about 1865, and the valley soon became famous. It is now provided with excellent hotels, sanatoria, etc., but as lately as 1860 there was only one inn there, housed in the 15<sup>th</sup>-century Rathhaus (town hall), which is still adorned by the heads of wolves shot in the neighbourhood. At the north end of the valley is the fine lake of Davos, used for skating in the winter, while from Platz the splendidly engineered Landwasserstrasse leads (20 m.) down to the Alvaneubad station on the Albula railway from Coire to the Engadine.

But, some time between 1260 and 1282, a colony of German-speaking persons from the Upper Valais (first mentioned in 1289) was planted there by its lord, Walter von Vaz, so that it has long been a Teutonic island in the midst of a Romansch-speaking population. Historically it is associated with the Prattigau or Landquart valley to the north, as it was the most important village of the region, and in 1436 became the capital of the League of the Ten Jurisdictions. It formerly contained many iron mines, and belonged from 1477 to 1649 to the Austrian Habsburgs.

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