

**THOMAS PLATTER AND
THE EDUCATIONAL
RENAISSANCE OF THE
SIXTEENTH CENTURY**

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Thomas Platter and the educational renaissance of the sixteenth century by Paul Monroe

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PAUL MONROE

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THE EDUCATIONAL
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SIXTEENTH CENTURY**

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EDITED BY

WILLIAM T. HARRIS, A. M., LL. D.

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EDITOR'S PREFACE

A summer traveller in the Alps leaves Lausanne, on Lake Geneva, on a slow train and goes up the valley of the Rhone, reaching Visp in four or five hours. The river Visp here flows into the Rhone. Visp is the name of the parish in which the author of this autobiography was born. It is a parish in the canton of Valais. In the autobiography the canton is spelled Walless, and the modern spelling is Wallis. It includes the valley of the Rhone from the upper end of Lake Geneva to its source in the Rhone glacier. Our traveller, who is supposed to make a journey from Lausanne to Zermatt, leaves Visp on the bridle road going up the river, and in a couple of hours arrives at Stalden, where the river divides into two branches, one going to the eastward of a spur of the Monte Rosa mountains, the highest of which rises nearly to the height of fifteen thousand feet, Monte Rosa itself reaching the height of 15,217 feet. This fork or branch is called the Saaser Visp from its chief village of Saas. To the westward of this high spur of Monte Rosa is the valley of the Gorner Visp flowing down from the immense Gorner glacier, swelled by the addition of seven other great glaciers from

Monte Rosa, the Matterhorn, the Breithorn, and other enormous mountains. Monte Rosa is the highest mountain in Switzerland, and next to Mt. Blanc the highest mountain in all the Alps. As our traveller goes on towards the south, ascending the Gorner Visp, the vast white mountain tops come to view one after the other. The huge mass of the Weisshorn, 14,800 feet high, is seen directly after reaching Stalden, entirely covered with snow.

Our traveller is in the neighbourhood of the birth-place of Platter. Between Stalden and St. Nicklaus there is the town Graechen; perhaps it is the Grenchen of which he speaks. The Platter family, he says, were called Platter from the plat or platten or blatten, a level surface or table-land or plateau on the top of a high mountain near Grenchen.

He further speaks of the town of Eisten, which is near Graechen, and is to be found on the Saaser fork of the Visp. He went there when he was six years old. Here were his experiences in herding the eighty goats a year or two later. We have mention of larger towns in the Rhone valley, such as Munster, Morel and Brieg, and of the Grimsell Pass, which leads over into the Haesli valley and to the lakes Brienz and Thun. After his marriage Platter made a visit to his native parish of Visp, climbing over the Grimsell Pass (seven thousand feet), his wife nearly freezing on the summit before descending into the Rhone valley.