Collections in Vienna, said in 1751 that such stones had been erroneously regarded as rarities, and should be thown away! Fortunately this advice was not followed.

A Commission of French observers was entrusted with the investigation of a meteorite that fell at Lucé, in the province of Maine, in September 1768. The Commission drew up a detailed description of the mineral constitution of the stone, but stated it to be a physical impossibility that the stone could have fallen from the heavens.

The great Wittenberg physicist, Chladni, at last demonstrated the correctness of the popular idea regarding meteorites. He published in 1794 a classical work, *On the Origin of the mass of iron found by Pallas in Siberia, and the explanation of the physical appearances associated with the falling of this and other similar masses.* Chladni regards meteorites as fragments of cosmic bodies, which, while travelling through space with enormous rapidity, come into the neighbourhood of the earth and are attracted by it; they become heated by the friction of the atmosphere, melt superficially, and finally break up owing to the development of gases and elastic fluid materials. This is, in its essential features, the view that is at present held by most authorities.

Since the appearance of Chladni's work a great number of meteors have been reported, and a careful register of meteorites has been drawn up in the writings of several astronomers, while the best specimens have been placed in museums.

Although it might have been supposed that the full details and the precise scientific basis of Chladni's work would convince all investigators, this was far from being the case. Some still held the opinion that meteorites were of telluric origin, while Laplace and Berzelius regarded them as volcanic refuse from the moon. Tschermak thought them fragments from the volcanic eruptions taking place on the earth and on other cosmic bodies.

The Englishman Howard was the first to investigate the chemical composition of meteorites. He showed that all meteorites have a similar composition, and chiefly consist of silicic acid, magnesia, iron, nickel, and sulphuret of iron. The investigations of other chemists have confirmed Howard's results, and demonstrated the presence in smaller quantity of a number of additional elements. In comparison with terrestrial rock-material the number of ingredients is very