

gifted family. His father was professor of surgery, his mother belonged to the French colony in Berlin. His inborn talent for languages developed early; while still at school, he mastered French, English, and Latin in addition to his native tongue. He studied medicine and natural science at Berlin, Halle, Göttingen, and Leyden, and after a visit to England, settled at the Hague in 1763, to devote himself exclusively to science. The turning-point in his career was an invitation to fill the chair of Natural History in the Imperial Academy of St. Petersburg, and the further request that he should undertake the leadership of an expedition to Siberia, planned by Empress Catherine II.

Pallas spent six years of great privation (1768-74) in Eastern Russia and Siberia, exploring the plains, rivers, and lakes, with a view both to their geography and to their faunas and floras, and he also examined geographically the Ural and Altai mountains.

Partly during the expedition and partly afterwards, Pallas published a three-volume work containing an account of his travels and observations. Few explorers have contributed such a vast wealth of geographical, geological, botanical, zoological, and ethnographical observations as Pallas has done in this justly famous work.

In 1793 Pallas commenced a journey of two years' duration in Southern Russia and the Crimea. He liked the province of Taurida so well that he afterwards took up residence there upon an estate presented to him by Empress Catherine. He continued his scientific researches for several years, until, failing in health and saddened by the loss of his wife, he returned to his native city in 1810, and died in Berlin in 1811.

Pallas occupied a high position in the scientific world. He achieved his successes mainly in zoological and geographical research, but he also contributed much to the progress of geology. His geological views are contained in a treatise published by the St. Petersburg Academy, *Consideration of the Structure of Mountain-Chains* (1777), and in the *Physical and Topographical Sketches of Taurida* (1794).

John Michell had in 1760 published in the *Philosophical Transactions* a series of observations on earthquakes and mountain-structure. This paper was accompanied by an ideal section through a mountain-system, showing a central core