

41.
Return to
empirical
psychology.

42.
J. F. Fries.

style from that of his published works; Fichte, in the course of his academic and political activity, modified very considerably the manner in which he approached what always remained his characteristic point of view; but the actual return from a purely rational to an empirical psychology was led by two educationalists—Herbart and Beneke. As stated in the beginning of this chapter, it was through them that psychology proper became a recognised branch of philosophical teaching. To these two names we may add that of J. F. Fries (1773-1843), who brought philosophy, as it were, back again from the transcendental to the empirical level.¹

In addition to this there were two distinct influences at work which co-operated with the movement just referred to in concentrating the attention of many thinking minds upon definite psychological questions, such as the nature and destiny of the human soul. The first of these influences came from the side of the natural sciences, which, mainly under the leadership of Johannes

¹ The importance of Fries' philosophy lay mainly in two very different directions. First, in his philosophy of religion, in which he assimilates ideas independently expressed by Jacobi and deals—as Schleiermacher did more fundamentally—with religion as a psychological phenomenon. Secondly, in his philosophy of nature, which, in opposition to that of Schelling, approached more to the position occupied in this country by natural philosophy. In this respect he was probably the only contemporary German philosopher who was noticed and appreciated by Gauss. The celebrated naturalist, Schleiden, tells us how Gauss referred to Fries' 'Mathematische Naturphil-

sophie' (1822), in the following words addressed to a student: "Young man, if you manage after three years of arduous study to understand and appreciate this book, you may leave the university with a conviction that you have employed your time better than most of your fellow-students" (see Henke, 'Jacob Friedrich Fries,' 1867, p. 226). To both of these directions of Fries' speculation I shall refer in later chapters. Fries was also one of the first who led psychological research in the direction of anthropology. His 'Handbuch der psychischen Anthropologie' appeared in two volumes in 1820.