

clined to be satisfied with poetical constructions; and thus it came about that the really important and original ideas of Fechner made little impression, that he did not count as a systematic philosopher at all, and that he was known outside of his purely scientific works mainly as a humorous writer.¹ His name appeared in

¹ Before the year 1860, when the 'Elements of Psycho-Physics' were published, Fechner was known partly through purely scientific works (notably his translations of Biot's 'Physics' and Thénard's 'Chemistry'), partly through humorous writings (under the pseudonym of Dr Mises), and some semi-religious Tracts ('Das Büchlein vom Leben nach dem Tode,' 1836; 'Ueber das Höchste Gut,' 1846; 'Nanna oder über das Seelenleben der Pflanzen,' 1848); lastly through his larger work ('Zendavesta oder über die Dinge des Himmels und des Jenseits,' 3 parts, 1851). In the latter he expounds in full earnest what earlier writings had only hinted at or fancifully put forward—viz., that the earth, as a higher spiritual Being, is the bearer of human consciousness, the intermediate link between the human and the Divine Being. The stars also are conscious beings. This appears absurd, but Fechner is certain of it: "Either my thesis or the prevailing ideas are incorrect, and must in consequence be altered. I maintain and demand the latter" ('Zendavesta,' Introduction). This doctrine is itself not new, only forgotten; the ancient religion of nature in the 'Zendavesta' is to be revived on the foundation of modern natural knowledge. Zendavesta means the "living word." The new Zendavesta is to be the word which gives life to Nature. See Kurd Lasswitz ('Gustav Theodor Fechner,' 1896), who has

had the merit of giving, for the first time, a coherent statement of Fechner's doctrine, removing it from the sphere of mere interesting, suggestive, and fanciful writing to the rank of a carefully thought-out philosophical speculation well worthy of separate study and replete with many valuable suggestions. Accordingly we find that in quite recent philosophy Fechner's ideas have become fruitful. Thus Fr. Paulsen, in his well-known 'Introduction to Philosophy,' acknowledges his indebtedness to Fechner; and Höffding, in his 'History of Philosophy' (Eng. transl., vol. ii. p. 524), treats of him, together with Lotze, as "The 'Dioscuri' of German philosophy in the latter half of our century. They are alike in idealistic tendency, in wide scientific knowledge, in poetic sense, and in the desire for a unified, conception of the world. They pursued kindred ends, although to a certain extent along different paths. . . . Fechner—like Kepler, whom he strikingly resembles—is an interesting example of how bold and imaginative speculations may lead to positive and exact results, provided that the thinker never loses sight of his fundamental thought, and is able to divest it of its mystical swaddling-bands. Just as Kepler was gradually led from mystical speculations to the discovery of the famous laws, which satisfied his longing to find definite mathematical relations obtaining in the real world, so Fechner's bold