THE FIGURE OF THE KNIGHT IN EICHENDORFF'S NARRATIVE PROSE

by

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A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS

in the Department
of
German

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to the required standard

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
April, 1966
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Date April 1966
Abstract

In the following study, the writer has considered the figure of the knight as it appears in Eichendorff's narrative prose works, particularly the two novels, "Ahnung und Gegenwart" and "Dichter und ihre Gesellen", and two Märchennovellen, "Die Zauberei im Herbst" and "Das Marmorbild". The knight is not necessarily good: he may embody evil principles, or, through weakness, succumb to the daemonic forces in nature. Generally, however, the knight possesses strong religious faith and its attendant virtues of loyalty, patriotism, and service to others. Whereas Eichendorff's strong religious stand varies from the usual Romantic pattern, his association of art and metaphysics is typically Romantic: the knight may also be a poet or become a priest. The knights of the Napoleonic era, that is, those in "Ahnung und Gegenwart", turn away from society, but those in the later works participate actively in mundane affairs. Indeed, in the end, Eichendorff comes to acknowledge the incidence of chivalrous behaviour in persons not born to knightly estate.
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I. Introduction

Eichendorff recognized human goodness wherever he found it: in the nobility, the bourgeoisie, peasants and artisans; in his fellow-Catholics, in Protestants, Jews or atheists; in the inhabitants of city or country. He also acknowledged the inevitability of changes in the social order and in government, and adapted himself with commendable courage and patience to the drastically reduced circumstances of his adult life and to the tribulations of civil service amidst uncongenial colleagues. But in his literary works he constantly extolled "the good old days" of the hereditary nobility, when, he believed, everyone knew his position and stayed in it unquestioningly, and when everyone was a devout Catholic.

In this attitude it is easy to detect the general view of the German Romantics toward their national history. Novalis' essay, "Die Christenheit oder Europa", is a crystallisation of this opinion, namely that during the Middle Ages thought and art were inspired by Christian unity. In their resentment of French intrusion into German affairs under Napoleon, many German intellectuals of the early nineteenth century sought comfort and inspiration in their national past, through whose evocation they wished to inspire their fellow-countrymen to national unity and resistance to the enemy. Knowledge of
history being even more imperfect than now, the
Romantics chose for this purpose that period during which
the zenith of mediaeval culture was reached: the late
twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, the time of the epic
of chivalry (or, as it was then called in French, the
"romant", from which the word "romantic" is derived), the
time of the Crusades.

In this period Eichendorff, like Novalis, saw
what he looked for: an ideal society in which church and
state were united in the outward form of the Holy Roman
Empire with the Pope as spiritual authority and the Emperor
as temporal, the latter owing allegiance and protection to
the former, and the whole of Europe happily German, since
Charlemagne, the founder of this Empire, had been a Germanic
chieftain. It is unnecessary to point out the fallacies and
deficiencies of such a view, the present study not being an
historical analysis. It suffices merely to state that this
was Eichendorff's conception of Germany up to the time of
the Reformation (indeed, until the time of the Aufklärung,
since he refers to the Thirty Years' War as "diese grosse
Tragödie des Mittelalters" (II,1023)¹ in his essay "Der Adel

¹Volumes and pages are referred to throughout this study
according to the most complete edition available to date of
Eichendorff's works: Joseph Freiherr von Eichendorff. Neue
Gesamtausgabe der Werke und Schriften in vier Bänden,
herausgegeben von Gerhard Baumann in Verbindung mit Siegfried
These four volumes appeared in 1957; a subsequent fifth
volume was not available to the present writer. The
reference above is to Volume II, page 1023, of this edition.
und die Revolution" (1848), on which event he blamed all
the subsequent ills of mankind, in his critical though not
in his literary works, which, for all their firmness, even
rigidity, of principle, are seldom tendentious.

In this sketchy conception of the times, the
outstanding figure is that of the knight. He is, of course,
a Roman Catholic; he is equally obviously of gentle birth
and breeding; he is, like every hero of a mediaeval romance,
the most handsome man imaginable, and so wealthy as never
to have to think of money. He may be a prince, he may be a
poet, he may turn monk or priest. Such a figure appears in
almost all of Eichendorff's narrative and dramatic works,
the few exceptions being satires in which the virtue of the
knight is emphasized by his absence: that is to say, there
is no virtue in a world without chivalry. His nobility
moreover, is not only that of birth, but that of character:
Eichendorff's knight must be first of all a good Catholic,
although in the literary works religious dogma is so little
stressed that one could almost substitute the phrase "a
good Christian", or even "a religious man"; in addition,
the knight is a loyal subject of his king or prince and the
faithful protector of his own dependants, and should serve
as an example of perfect wisdom in all matters, spiritual
and temporal.

Eichendorff made use of the mediaeval institution
of knighthood, not to supply a picturesque background to
his works, as did Tieck, Fouqué, and others, but to call
attention to a period during which ideals, as expressed in
the literature of the time, were particularly high, and
which he regarded as the standard for a Christian society;
and hence to inspire his contemporaries, particularly the
members of the nobility, the spiritual descendants of
Parzival and Iwein, to acknowledge and to attempt to
revivify these ideals. For although, in "Die Geschichte
der poetischen Literatur Deutschlands", (1857), Eichendorff
censures, with an animosity quite astonishing in a man
otherwise so mild and courteous, anyone, past or present,
who dares to criticise the nobility or any other manifesta-
tion of tradition, he is by no means unaware that nobles
can have faults. But he believes that they also have and
should apply the ability to overcome their faults, that it
is their duty to be noble in the spiritual sense of the word,
and to encourage their social inferiors to behave as well
as is consistent with their lesser capacity. In only one
way does Eichendorff acknowledge the equality of mankind,
and that implicitly: all men (and even women) are equal
in the eyes of God, equally entitled to His Grace, equally
obliged to be good Catholics: the figure of the "Taugenichts",
that delightful, irresponsible, incorruptible miller's son,
is a case in point. But even in the realm of religion, the
nobles are better endowed by their superior heredity than
the common folk, and should act as lay interpreters of the
word of God, and as examples of the true Christian.
One of the characters in a sketch for an allegorical drama is thus described by Eichendorff:

"Ein getreuer Ritter:
ritterlich und treu und hochherzig
aufopfernd, das alte Regime bis zum Tode verteidigend." (I, 955)

The one indispensable attribute which he omits from the above description, but which can be deduced both from the fact that the drama was to be in the style of Calderon and from Eichendorff's general attitude to life, is religious faith. In his view, anyone who is "ritterlich" is a devout Christian, pure in heart, without taint of worldliness, and, as in the description, loyal and nobly self-sacrificing.

Eichendorff's exhortation to noble behaviour was no empty rhetoric. He himself rode off to war in the best knightly tradition, to help free his country from her enemies, and devoted years of service to the Prussian government. In private life, he was an exemplary Christian and nobleman, meeting adversity with fortitude and fame with humility, and suffering fools, if not gladly, at least with courtesy. In his purely literary works he never ceased to express the beauty of his ideals, almost entirely without didacticism, and it is to some of these that we must turn to follow the gradual alteration of his views of the place of the knight in the society of his own time.
II. Die Zauberei im Herbst

(Summary. The knight Ubaldo, separated from his companions during a hunt, comes upon a man who shelters him overnight in an isolated cave. Ubaldo deduces, from the man's clothing and from the song and incoherent prayers which he overhears during the night, that his host is a knight doing penance for some sin, but without the strength of mind or of faith to bring about his rehabilitation. Ubaldo repeats his visit, and finally induces the hermit to come to his castle and tell him his story.

The hermit relates that he and a friend were about to set out on a crusade together, but that he failed to join it because of his secret love for a young lady. He rides off hunting instead, and hears hunting horns and a song which he eventually finds to be sung by his beloved, who receives him in an exotic garden. She says that she has long loved him, but that he is unfortunate to have come within hearing of her song; without explaining this odd statement, she tells him that she has been forced into betrothal with his friend, who has deceived him and will come on the morrow to fetch her away - unless he dies. On the following day he meets the friend in the mountains, fights with him, and pushes him over a cliff. Thereupon he hastens to the lady's castle, where he stays as her lover. She suffers from melancholy at the decline of the autumn, and one night he awakes to find her apparently dead.

Once more he rushes off aimlessly into the wilderness, awaking the next morning to discover that spring has come. He feels too bewildered and guilty to return to normal life, and seeks to expiate his sins in solitude. After a year Ubaldo finds him.

Ubaldo thereupon reveals to Raimund, whom he has recognised during the narrative, that he himself was the friend Raimund thought he had killed: that he had gone on the crusade and after it had married Berta whom they both loved; that many years have passed, with Raimund under the influence of an evil magic which appears in this neighbourhood in the autumn.

The information that he has spent his whole life under an illusion drives Raimund to despair. He rushes out into the woods, where the music of the autumnal enchantment can once more be heard, and is never seen again.)
Eichendorff's first prose narrative, "Die Zauberei im Herbste", was written in 1809 although not published until 1906. This is one of only two prose tales by Eichendorff which are set in the Middle Ages; the second, "Die Glücksritter", written in 1841, is mediaeval only in Eichendorff's view of the term (see p. 3), taking place shortly after the Thirty Years' War. The first is a product of his immaturity; hence, presumably, its suppression until long after his death; the second is a picaresque variation on the theme of "Aus dem Leben eines Taugenichts", with which it shares realism in detail and a total lack of realism in plot. Likewise a fundamental purity ennobles both the "Glücksritter", Siglhuber, and Taugenichts, each of whom is a miller's son with a serious ethical attitude underlying his apparent frivolity. All Eichendorff's Märchen, Novellen and novels, subsequent to "Die Zauberei im Herbste", are serious confrontations of contemporary problems, even when, as in "Libertas und ihre Freier", the problems are dealt with in the guise of a rollicking farce.

In neither of the two "mediaeval" stories does the historical situation play an important part: it merely supplies a few details in events which, apart from the mention of the Crusades or the Thirty Years' War, could equally well have taken place in the author's life-time. In fact, Eichendorff totally lacked a sense of historical
or geographical background - his tropical islands in "Eine Meerfahrt" (1835) are merely Silesian hills with palm trees - a deficiency which can also be remarked in Shakespeare's works, and which hardly constitutes a reproach to either writer, as both were concerned mainly with the human soul.

"Die Zauberei im Herbst" sets forth the chief problem which is to be found throughout Eichendorff's works: a choice between adherence to the Christian faith, or despair and annihilation. This conflict can be observed in all the literary works, from such apparently simple lyrics as "Zwielicht" (1811) to the tragedies, conceived on the grand scale. Faith even becomes a criterion in his literary history. In "Die Zauberei im Herbst", the problem is confronted on the smallest scale: one steadfast Christian knight is opposed to another knight who succumbs to temptation; one ideal woman is contrasted with temptation personified as her double. Numerous minor figures may be ignored, as they have no influence on the action.

Eichendorff goes straight to the heart of the matter: the soul is endangered by lack of faith associated with sensuality. Ubaldo, the exemplary knight, and his wife, Berta, resist these dangers successfully: "Zauberei soll in den nahen Wäldern wohnen, und oft zur Herbstzeit streifen solche Töne in der Nacht bis an unser Schloss. Es vergeht eben so schnell als es kommt, und wir bekümmern uns
weiter nicht darum (II, 981)."\(^1\) His resistance to
temptation arises directly from his faith which also leads
him far enough into the missionary field to attempt to
redeem the knightly recluse, Raimund, even before
recognizing him as his old friend: "Dies bewog den frommen
Ritter Ubaldo, seine Besuche öfter zu wiederholen, um
den Schwindelden mit der ganzen vollen Kraft eines
ungetrübten, schuldlosen Gemüts zu umfassen und zu erhalten."
(II, 973) Ubaldo's zeal causes him to express himself like
a prig; Berta, his perfect wife, self-effacing, pious, and
competent, appears insipid. These flaws perhaps motivated
in part the long suppression of this tale. Nevertheless,
in these two figures Eichendorff expresses the ideal
conception of the knight and his lady to which he adhered
all his life, although he gradually overcame the problem
of presenting his characters in a manner which does not
repel the reader.

Parenthetically it should be remarked that Ubaldo
has fulfilled the military aspect of his calling, in that
he fought in the Holy Land for several years. This activity,

\(^1\) Eichendorff usually associates spring and the
sultriness of summer with sensual temptation, but in this
eyear early work autumn, the season of decline and of a final late
flowering in nature, is equated with a moral decline and an
increased susceptibility to sensual temptation in mankind.
This temptation is made manifest in the birdsong and
hunting horns which accompany the temptress on her ride
through the woods.
however, Eichendorff regards as less important than the lifelong Christian duty of the knight. Ubaldo's doughty deeds are merely matter for conversation in the story, whereas his faith obviously is the cause of his going on a crusade, the guiding light of his way of life, and the spur for his endeavour to help Raimund.

The unfortunate Raimund is Eichendorff's first depiction of the knight who knows his duty but fails to carry it out. He had planned to go on a crusade with Ubaldo, but drew back from this venture at the last moment because of his secret love for Berta. Had his faith been as sincere as Ubaldo's, he too would have made the hazardous pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and perhaps there have recovered from his unhappy love. Instead he is lured into the wilderness by the sensual "Zauberei im Herbst", personified as Berta's double, a device used again more skilfully in "Das Marmorbild", and also on a number of more trivial occasions, though the "Doppelgänger" motif is more commonly associated with Eichendorff's male characters.

Raimund, having once fallen victim to the snare of sensuality, becomes, like most other Eichendorff figures in the same situation, bewildered, deluded, oblivious to the passage of time. He thinks that only a year has elapsed since Ubaldo's departure to the Holy Land, whereas perhaps ten years have passed by. Horrified by Ubaldo's statement of the facts concerning himself and Berta, Raimund
cries, "Verloren, alles verloren! ... Ja, verloren, und meine Liebe und mein ganzes Leben eine lange Täuschung!" (II, 984) Ubaldo's efforts are vain. Raimund relapses permanently into his delusion at the next manifestation of the autumnal bewitchment.

The effect of faith is manifested very plainly in this story in the difference between Ubaldo's and Raimund's responses to the erotic song of the enchantress, "Über gelb' und rote Streifen" (II, 976), and also to the sound of church bells. Both Ubaldo and Raimund, and presumably Berta, since Ubaldo says, "Wir bekümmer uns nicht darum" (II, 981), are susceptible to the daemonic appeal to the senses as symbolised by the autumnal music, but this appeal is firmly repressed by Ubaldo, secure in his faith and in his happy marriage.  

Even the sound of church bells, on most occasions a source of reassurance to Eichendorff's characters, brings no comfort to Raimund. In relating his story, he says to Ubaldo:

"Marriage is a topic seldom discussed by Eichendorff, although two happy marriages, both between members of the bourgeoisie, are touched upon in "Dichter und ihre Gesellen" (1834), and most of his novels and Novellen end with the imminent prospect of one or more happy marriages. In general, his characters are single or widowed or unhappily married; for instance, the unhappy marriages of the Fürst and Fürstin and of Otto and Amnidi offset the two happy ones in "Dichter und ihre Gesellen"."
"... im Innersten erschreckten mich noch immer die Glockenklänge des fernen Doms, wenn sie am klaren Sonntagsmorgen über die Berge zu mir herüberlangten, als suchten sie das alte, stille Gottesreich der Kindheit in meiner Brust, das nicht mehr in ihr war...." (II, 983)

This admission indicates that he is lost beyond recall: the cathedral bells arouse terror in him instead of calling him back to the church, and the "heavenly kingdom of childhood" - childhood being virtually synonymous with home and heaven in the view of Eichendorff and other Romantics - has passed away from him. Therefore his avowed attempt to purify himself by living as a hermit and praying is a vain show of repentance, lacking the faith which would cause him to go to the nearest priest for assistance in overcoming his weakness and atoning for his sins.

Raimund's spiritual vacillation is symbolized by his attire: although living as a hermit, he wears "einen sehr zierlichen und prächtigen Wams" (II, 972), the doublet which Eichendorff considers indispensable for a knight: horse, armour and weapons are expendable, but a "ritterlicher Wams" at once identifies a knight.\(^3\) The unsuitability of the clothing to his way of life strikes Ubaldo (and the reader) at once: here is a hermit who has been unable to cast aside the lure of worldly life and assume a devout attitude together with a monk's habit.

\(^3\) It is the sole chivalric attribute of the would-be knight in Rudolf's castle in "Ahnung und Gegenwart" (II, 253), and of course, in his case, is rather a disguise than a token of honourable estate.
His doublet is no masquerade garment: he has a right to it; but it betrays the fact that his pretension to religious life is insincere. This fact emerges yet more clearly in the prayers, "wie verwirrte Zaubermformeln", and in the song, "Aus der Kluft treibt mich das Bangen" (II, 972), both overheard by Ubaldo, whom Raimund supposed to be asleep.

The second stanza begins with the lines:

"Gott! Inbrünstig möcht' ich beten,
Doch der Erde Bilder treten
Immer zwischen dich und mich."

He foresees his doom, expressed in the final lines of his song:

"Ach, wie bald bin ich verloren!
Jesus, hilf in meiner Not!"

Even this direct appeal to Jesus does not help. The more mature Eichendorff scarcely ever allows sinners to be denied grace: for instance, Otto in "Dichter und ihre Gesellen", in a situation very similar to that of Raimund, dies in circumstances strongly suggesting absolution; but the less tolerant young author of "Die Zauberei im Herbste" denies salvation to Raimund.

The main difference between the two knights of this story lies in the sincerity of their faith: Ubaldo is sincere and steadfast, Raimund insincere, vacillating, and eventually lost. Raimund sums up this disparity at the beginning of his visit to Ubaldo's castle:

"'Ihr seid glücklich,' sagte er, 'und ich betrachte Eure feste, freudige, männliche Gestalt mit wahrer Scheu und Ehrfurcht, wie Ihr Euch, unbekümmert durch Leid und Freud, bewegt und das Leben ruhig regiert,
The true knight is, like Ubaldo, "fest, freudig und männlich"; the knight who neglects his duty joins the ranks of numerous other characters "intoxicated by life", whom daemonic possession leads to their doom.

This motif of the knight who is unable to live up to the demands of his calling is by no means unique to Eichendorff. It is to be found, for instance, in Tieck's "Der getreue Eckart und der Tannenhäuser" (I, 799) (which "Die Zauberei im Herbste" strongly resembles) and "Der Runenberg" (1802), in Fouqué's "Undine" (1811) and Grillparzer's most Romantic play, "Melusine" (1823). But Eichendorff's tale, while inferior in structure to these other Romantic works, differs from them in supplying a counterpart to the unbridled hero who follows his daemonic urges until he is destroyed. Ubaldo, however unconvincingly depicted, personifies the characteristics necessary for a good, steadfast life. Thus, in Eichendorff's earliest prose work, his essential difference from the other Romantic writers is made manifest: though indisputably Romantic in style and thematic material, he never loses his grip on a moral purpose, that is, the necessity of
faith to combat the irrational forces in man and the world.
The dangers confronting the Romantic poet are vividly
described by Victor of "Dichter und ihre Gesellen":

"Es gibt nur wenige Dichter in der Welt, und von
den wenigen kaum einer steigt unversehrt in
diese märchenhafte, prächtige Zaubernacht, wo
die wilden, feurigen Blumen stehen und die
Liederquellen verworren nach den Abgründen
gehen, und der zauberische Spielmann zwischen
dem Waldesrauschen mit herzzerreissenden
Klängen nach dem Venusberg verlockt, in
welchem alle Lust und Pracht der Erde entzündet,
und wo die Seele wie im Traum frei wird mit
ihren dunklen Gelüsten!" (II, 657)

The poet who wishes to remain unharmed by the
dangers inherent in his pursuit of the Muse, must cling to
religion, which indeed is the only hope for anyone, as
phantasy and sensuality are not reserved for poets alone.

Moreover, in "Die Zauberei im Herbst", as in the
later Märchen, "Das Marmorbild" (1819), Eichendorff uses
irrational phenomena in nature as symbolic of the
confrontation with temptation taking place within the soul
of the hero. That this conflict is universal is shown by
Ubaldo's and Berta's awareness of the autumnal magic; that
the outcome need not be tragic is shown by their adherence
to their religious faith. The unfortunate Raimund is
deficient in this attribute, as are the tragic heroes of
most other Romantic tales. Thus "Die Zauberei im Herbst"
is redeemed from being a mere echo of Tieck's "Der blonde
Eckbert" or "Getreuer Eckart", not by its plot, structure,
or characterisation, but by its firm recommendation of an
alternative to Romantic "Zerrissenheit", by the assertion of the absolute value of religion which was Eichendorff's lodestar. Of his two knights, the one who yields to his daemonic urges is lost, failing in his duty to God and his country. On the other hand, the one who carries out the duties of the Christian knight is safe in his faith, and serves as an example of what Eichendorff considered to be the essential attributes of a knight: faith, patriotism (here, of course, manifested in participation in a Crusade, an ultra-national phenomenon), loyalty and service to others.
III. Ahnung und Gegenwart

(Summary. Book I. Friedrich, travelling after the completion of his university studies, is attacked by robbers. He regains consciousness in the home of Leontin, with whose sister Rosa he has already fallen in love on meeting her briefly during his journey. A mysterious boy, Erwin, has attached himself to Friedrich as his servant.

After some weeks of pleasant companionship with Leontin and the poet Faber, Friedrich sets off on a further journey with these friends, Leontin having returned in a state of alarm from one of his solitary visits to the woods. Rosa insists on accompanying them, but soon meets her friend Romana, who takes her to the capital. Faber also goes his own way.

Leontin and Friedrich continue their travels, alone except for Erwin, and are invited to stay with Herr v.A., his widowed sister, and his beautiful daughter, Julie. After an idyllic sojourn, Leontin takes fright at the thought of marriage and flees, leaving Friedrich to make their farewells and proceed on his way.

Book II. Friedrich arrives in the capital, is received by the Prime Minister, and becomes a friend of the Crown Prince, who is the leader of a group of young noblemen interested in working for their country. Friedrich disrupts, by brutally frank criticism, a literary salon at which various Romantic aberrations are illustrated. The central thought of Eichendorff's works, the triumph of Christianity over paganism, the latter particularly in the guise of unbridled sensuality, is depicted in a tableau with Rosa as Christianity, with a knight kneeling before her, and Romana as paganism.

Romana, a beautiful and talented but unprincipled young widow, falls in love with Friedrich and almost succeeds in seducing him, but he is rescued in time by hearing Leontin singing outside. Romana falls into despair, and after a period of wild behaviour, varied by an attempt at piety, kills herself in her ancestral castle.

Friedrich meanwhile neglects Rosa in his absorption in the Prince and his circle, with whose veiled selfishness he gradually becomes disillusioned. Eventually the Prince abducts Rosa despite Friedrich's last minute attempt to save her.

Book III. Friedrich, on his way to Italy after these disheartening experiences, falls in with a group of guerilla fighters who are making a last stand against the
tyranny of Napoleon. He finds temporary satisfaction in fighting for his country and in prayer, but his group is defeated, and as his ruler had made an alliance with the enemy, Friedrich's lands are confiscated.

He proceeds towards Leontin's castle, and, at the nearby mill where he had been attacked by robbers on his first visit, finds Leontin and Julie, now betrothed, and a young girl, the former "Erwin", who had disappeared before Friedrich left the capital, and who, after her sudden, untimely death, is found to be Friedrich's niece. Leontin too has been outlawed, though he can expect to be forgiven as Rosa is about to marry the Crown Prince.

Leontin and Friedrich travel through the mountains and come to a castle inhabited by lunatics, which turns out to belong to Friedrich's long lost brother Rudolf, whose resemblance to Leontin has caused various puzzles. Rudolf is disillusioned with love, art, philosophy and religion, and despite Friedrich's efforts to restore his faith, declares that he is going to Egypt to study magic. Faber finds his way to the castle in time to join the wedding celebrations for Leontin and Julie; no one notices Rosa in a group of pilgrims.

Then all the main characters scatter: Leontin and Julie to America, Faber to his usual pursuits in Germany, Rudolf presumably to Egypt. Friedrich alone remains behind on the mountain top, about to enter the priesthood and to aid in the salvation of his country by prayer.

With the completion in 1812 of his first novel "Ahnung und Gegenwart", Eichendorff suddenly achieved artistic eminence. The novel represents an almost incredible improvement upon "Die Zauberei im Herbst", which embodies in immature and incomplete form Eichendorff's views on the duties of the knight and of the dangers which might prevent performance of these duties. The early tale has a plot which might have been invented by any young writer of the day, being strongly reminiscent of Tieck's "Der getreue Eckart und der Tannenhäuser", and combining elements of magic with a conventional mediaeval background.
Only certain details of style serve to give it that individuality which is unmistakably Eichendorff's even in this embryonic work: for instance, the "unzählige Lerchen" (II, 983) which here make their literary debut; the "grünlich-goldene Scheine" (II, 985) of the enchantress' jewels, which colour is always associated with evil in Eichendorff's works; the potential for evil in music, as represented here by the "goldgelber Vogel" (II, 985) whose singing lures Raimund to his doom at the enchanted castle, the song of the enchantress (another device frequently used later, though never again so sensually expressed), and the "verlockendes Waldhornlied" (II, 976), yet another motif very familiar to readers of Eichendorff; the exclamation, "Mein Gott! wo bin ich so lange gewesen" (II, 982), which is the typical outcry of Eichendorff's "vom Leben Berauschten" (II, 974) as they emerge from their delusions; the deathly pallor and rigidity of the temptress and the horror felt by her victim (II, 982), and the frequent use of the verb "verwirren" in reference to temptation. Even in 1809 Eichendorff's style was already so highly developed that almost any paragraph could be identified out of context as Eichendorff's work by anyone familiar with his

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1 This point will be discussed in Chapter IV.

2 Against this theme of the seductive quality of music must be considered its power for salvation, as in the cases of Friedrich of "Ahnung und Gegenwart" (1815) and Florio of "Das Marmorbild" (1819). Music is only potentially, not necessarily, evil - like mankind.
later writings. Likewise his ethical values were already established. Nevertheless, the narrative as such seems puerile and the events are often derivative: the pool with the bathing maidens (II, 979) reminds the reader at once of the similar scene in Novalis' "Heinrich von Ofterdingen", and the bleeding apparition of Ubaldo at the window of Raimund's castle (II, 985) is reminiscent of countless, similar phenomena in Gothic novels and fate dramas of the period. There is, in fact, nothing in this tale, other than the charm and originality of its literary style, to indicate anything but a mediocre talent.

It is astounding, therefore, to realize that three years after writing it, its author completed his second prose work, "Ahnung und Gegenwart", a novel which assured him of immediate recognition in the literary world on its publication in 1815. Virtually between one moment and the next, the boy became a man, the hackneyed story was followed by a mature novel with amazing breadth of vision and sureness of judgment. There are still occasional reminders that Eichendorff was only twenty-three when he finished this novel: Friedrich sometimes appears as priggish as Ubaldo, particularly in his homilies to Romana (II, 223) and the literary salon (II, 145), where he upbraids the poetasters with candour, acumen, and gross discourtesy (but one cannot imagine the lifeless Ubaldo capable of either acumen or
discourtesy; and in spite of numerous discussions on poetry, one of the main themes of the novel, Eichendorff leaves us at the end a little unsure as to his requirements for the poet's life and mission. But he has advanced so far beyond the literary capacity he showed in "Die Zauberei im Herbst", that he can ridicule this type of story which he has already left far behind.

Twice in "Ahnung und Gegenwart" Eichendorff scoffs at the literary fiction of the knight, once in the literary salon, where, besides quoting two of his own poems (II, 133-134), written under the influence of his friend, as models of worthlessness, he parodies in Romana's grotesque ballad (II, 135-140) the folly of poets who attempt to disguise themselves as knights of old; and a second time in Rudolf's castle, where the second of Rudolf's collection of lunatics to greet Friedrich and Leontin is a young man dressed in the indispensable "Wams" (II, 253), who rants about his own unworthiness of the dignity of knighthood before removing the doublet, together with his high style of speech, and revealing himself as an up-to-date adherent of the Berlin literary salons. Thus does Eichendorff expose the valuelessness of the mediaeval knight used as a mere literary convention.

3It is amusing in this connection to recall a note at the end of Eichendorff's "Memoirenfragmenten": "Predigt von der Pedanterie der Jugend." (II, 1094).
This criticism might seem at first glance to eliminate the knight as a figure of importance in his works. Such a deduction, however, is false: not only does Eichendorff in this novel use the terms "rittlerlich" and "altritterlich" repeatedly in a favourable sense, but also his characters hold serious discussions on knightly virtues and their application to contemporary life, for instance, in Friedrich's impassioned rejection of artifice in poetry:

"Wo soll die rechte, schlichte Sitte, das treue Tun, das schöne Lieben, die deutsche Ehre und alle die alts herrliche Schönheit sich hinflüchten, wenn es ihre angebornen Ritter, die Dichter, nicht wahrhaft ehrlich, aufrichtig und ritterlich mit ihr [der Poesie] meinen?" (II, 32)

The question of the degree to which the knight and the poet are identical will arise later and therefore can be left in abeyance for the moment. The important aspect of this extract from Friedrich's speech is its affirmation of knightly virtues. This is no mere stage setting as in "Die Zauberei im Herbste", but an earnest recommendation of ethical ideals which governed the knights of the Middle Ages and which have universal relevance.

These ideals seem to be lacking in one of the most curious characters to appear in the novel: the Don Quixote figure wrapped in a white cloak and mounted upon a white jade. (II, 70) He is a debased modern version of

This is one of many references to Don Quixote (e.g. II, 37 and 118) which hint at Eichendorff's interest in Spanish literature. In the 1840's one of his main literary activities was the translation of Spanish poems and plays into German. Amongst these were eleven plays of Calderon, whom, for religious reasons, he regarded as superior to Shakespeare.
the knight errant, a mounted tramp who trades on his knightly birth to obtain free board and lodging with the Herr v.A. and neighbouring members of the country nobility. At first reading, his few entrances hint at mystery, like those of Rudolf, who remains unidentified for most of the book, but this Knight of the Woeful Countenance remains a minor figure, an emasculated reminder of the "Raubritter" in his parasitic ways, an indication that noble birth is not necessarily accompanied by nobility of character. His function is to serve as a warning against the potential ludicrousness of attempting to preserve the external and inessential aspects of mediaeval knighthood in the modern world.

The extreme example of the possible discrepancy between birth and character is to be found in the Crown Prince, who on his first appearance impresses Friedrich most favourably:

"Wie wenn ein Ritter, noch ein heiliges Bild voriger, rechter Jugend, dessen Anblicks unser Auge längst entwöhnt ist, uns plötzlich begegnete, so ragte der herrliche Reiter über die verworrene, falbe Menge, die sein wildes Ross auseinandersprengte." (II, 127)

This magnificent effect seems to be confirmed by Friedrich's subsequent association with the Prince, who gathers about him a group of high-minded young men to discuss and promote the welfare of their country. Everything appears to indicate that the Prince is, as he should be, the flower of chivalry, the prime model of the knightly class.
Eventually, however, the hint contained in the above quotation, namely, that although the Prince is compared with a "Ritter", he is referred to as a "Reiter", a mere horseman, is amplified by successive discoveries to the Prince's discredit which reach their nadir in his confession of utter insincerity, his abduction of Rosa, and his alliance with the enemy. The image of almost sacred knighthood which he at first presented has gradually crumbled to reveal the corrupt figure of a scoundrel and traitor.

The Prince's fall from grace is the most spectacular deviation from the ideals of chivalry in the novel. However, there is one example of greater importance to the main characters: that of Rudolf, brother of Friedrich, double of Leontin, and owner of the "Narrenbürg" near which the culminating events occur.

The three Grafen, Rudolf, Friedrich and Leontin, were born into the knightly class, and could be expected to carry out its ideals to the full, especially as all are

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5 This distinction between "Ritter" and "Reiter" is repeated in connection with Rudolf's "Ritternarr". Friedrich und Leontin "bemerken mit Verwunderung, dass er ein ledernes Reiterwams trug und seine ganze Trecht überhaupt altdeutsch sei." (II, 125) On the next page, after his voluntary unmasking, the sham knight "zog sein Ritterwams vom Leibe". Once Eichendorff has made his point about the falsity of the young man's claim, he uses the word "Ritter" for him, trusting that the reader will "mit und über dem Buche dichten" (II, 99) and keep the pretence in mind.
unusually intelligent and talented. In the end, only one clings to the full duty of the knight - religious, military, and social - and Rudolf seems to have renounced all the obligations of his rank.

Rudolf remains anonymous in the novel until the moment when, after years of separation, he walks up to Friedrich, remarking phlegmatically, "Willkommen, Bruder." (II, 260) His existence was first mentioned on Friedrich's meeting with Leontin, who reminds him of his long-lost elder brother. A mysterious stranger who converses with Erwin at night in Leontin's garden (II, 39), a second who frightens Leontin into flight from his castle (II, 36), a third, dressed as a black knight with suggestions of a skeleton, who speaks to Rosa and others at a ball in the Residenz (II, 113-115), all turn out to have been Rudolf. His identity is hinted at just before his appearance at the "Narrenburg" by Leontin's confession that his flight had been inspired by the horror of an encounter, in the forest near his sweetheart's house, with a stranger who is his double (II, 255-256). The motif of the "Doppelgänger" recurs in Rudolf's last encounter with the stranger, seen by him for the first time on the occasion of his flight from his birthplace, for the second time when an old gypsy woman tells his and Angelina's fortunes at the castle where the brothers grow up, and subsequently at various turning points in his life until he accidentally kills this double.
The mystification of the reader by this repeated association of Rudolf, the stranger, Angelina and the gypsy, is one of the chief weaknesses of the novel: excessive emphasis on coincidence is inartistic in such a serious work. However, mystery for its own sake appealed irresistibly to Eichendorff, and always remained a factor in his works, even in his last Novelle, "libertas und ihre Freier" and in many of his lyrics. 6

It is unfortunate that so much mystification should be attached to Rudolf. Eichendorff may have intended it to emphasize the importance of this character, but its effect has been the exact opposite, and the obscurity surrounding the events of Rudolf's life has served to divert the reader's interest from him rather than attract it to him.

Rudolf has received very little serious attention from the critics. Thomas A. Riley 7 attempts to reduce him to an allegory of the "Zeitgeist" or of Protestantism.

6His comedy, "Die Freier", is an extreme example of mystification and misunderstandings, comparable to Nestroy's "Liebesgeschichten und Heiratssachen" and doubtless likewise inspired by the Viennese comic tradition, Eichendorff being a self-confessed "Kasperl" enthusiast, as numerous entries in his diaries of his long stay in Vienna (1810-1813) relate (e.g. III, 265, 267, 272).

Ingeborg-Maria Porsch considers that the insecurity of Rudolf's childhood has rendered him incapable of accomplishing anything worthwhile in his maturity. Emil Tamm says Rudolf is "der bedeutendste Repräsentant der romantisch-individualistischen Lebensanschauung in 'Ahnung und Gegenwart'", but gives him up as a failure, as indeed Eichendorff does himself. Ricarda Huch, like the present writer, considers Rudolf one of the three heroes of the novel, the others being Friedrich and Leontin, but grants no more than this statement to him in her very short discussion of the work. Her only real interest in him is with regard to Eichendorff's conception of Italy as a sultry background to illicit love affairs, since Rudolf's liaison with Angelina is the sole event in his life which she considers. Helga Haberland regards him as an extreme example of the Romantic Zerrissener. The only critic who holds out any hope for him is Hans Brandenburg, who, although referring to Rudolf as "ein einziges romantisches
Krankheitsbild", remarks that "dennoch ist ihm als Letztes und Einziges die Sehnsucht geblieben, als müsse die Sonne aufgehen."

The present writer agrees with Brandenburg that Rudolf's case is not so hopeless as it seems. Undoubtedly Eichendorff intended to make of this character a dreadful example, even as he meant Friedrich to represent human perfection. And yet he failed in both attempts. Rudolf is presented as a black sheep, but he has carried out his duty as a knight by fighting for his country, he has made a living by painting pictures, he has studied philosophy, and when the reader is finally introduced to him in his own right, Rudolf is running a successful mental asylum. He has obviously a forceful and energetic personality, and retains a vestige of that faith which he himself believes he has lost and which Eichendorff considered vital. Rudolf says of his abandoning the study of philosophy, "alle Systeme führten mich entweder von Gott ab, oder zu einem falschen Gott" (II, 274): such a statement implies a belief in God, however inactive. His announcement of his plan to study magic in Egypt does not carry conviction: it seems rather a desperate attempt on the part of the author to keep this lively character within the bounds originally set for him. If he really were to come to a bad end, "es müsste wahrlich mit dem Eigensinn eines Romanschreibers zugehen" (II, 710), as Walter says in "Dichter und ihre Gesellen".
Friedrich, on the other hand, the intended paragon of the novel, reflects pallidly the events of Rudolf's life. He, too, fulfills his knightly duty in battle and likewise suffers defeat; but his experiences satisfy him at the time, whereas Rudolf's were all unpleasant, particularly his regaining consciousness on the battlefield, deserted amongst corpses. Both brothers give up their art, Friedrich that of poetry, Rudolf painting, the springs of their talent apparently subsiding when their loves come to an end. Both incur guilt in love: Angelina bears Rudolf an illegitimate daughter whom she takes with her on abandoning him; Friedrich merely neglects and forgets Rosa, whom he has led to expect marriage. In their general duty toward society, Rudolf has accomplished more with his lunatics than Friedrich with the Crown Prince's group of planners; however, the failure of this group is by no means attributable to Friedrich, and he hopes to carry out his obligations in a different way, namely, through prayer.

The brothers' lives are too similar to justify one being condemned outright while the other is extolled. Rudolf's character, already appearing in a more favourable light by its likeness to Friedrich's, is further redeemed when he is compared with the Crown Prince, the really villainous personage, laden with guilt in many matters from seduction to treason, a false knight in all respects.

Friedrich and Rudolf fulfill in varying degrees their duties as knights. Both fight for their country but subsequently give up the use of arms, their defection
being symbolised by the broken coat-of-arms at their old home (II, 251). In regard to the knight's obligation to protect the weak, Rudolf has worked wonders with the mentally afflicted, whereas the younger Friedrich has as yet accomplished nothing, though he has hopes of succeeding in his own way. Eichendorff's knights must, above all, be good Christians. Rudolf fulfills this duty in regard to works, though his faith is not all that it should be. Friedrich, on the other hand, is endowed with an unshakeable faith, through which he hopes to help bring about better conditions in his country. His faith leads him to embrace the vocation of priesthood, his moment of decision being described as almost an apotheosis of the knighthood he has renounced:

"Da [in der Bibel] fand er Trost über die Verwirrung der Zeit, und das einzige Recht und Heil auf Erden in dem heiligen Kreuze. Er hatte endlich den phantastischen, tausendfarbigen Pilgermantel abgeworfen, und stand nun in blanker Rüstung als Kämpfer Gottes gleichsam an der Grenze zweier Welten. Wie oft, wenn er da über die Täler hinaussah, fiel er auf seine Knie und betete inbrünstig zu Gott, ihm Kraft zu verleihen, was er in der Erleuchtung erfahren, durch Wort und Tat seinen Brüdern mitzuteilen." (II, 284)

This exaltation is the corollary to his dream of the Christ child, who said:

"'Liebst du mich recht, so gehe mit mir unter. Als Sonne wirst du dann wieder aufgehen, und die Welt ist frei!'" (II, 166)

Thus, though both brothers must be considered failures as knights, at least the elder has found a
practical way of helping mankind, and the younger, though not quite the hero his position as central character in the novel might lead the reader to expect, nevertheless rejects his knighthood only to embrace a calling which transcends it in Eichendorff's view: that of the priest.

The only character who remains true to all of the ideals of knighthood is Leontin, although he too feels the impossibility of carrying them out in the Germany of his day (In this matter the poet Eichendorff is at variance with the Freiherr von Eichendorff who, shortly after the completion of this novel, joined the Lutzower Jäger to help liberate his country, and subsequently devoted to it many years as a civil servant.). He feels that the present is hopelessly corrupt, but that God will put an end to this degradation and open the way for useful action by the faithful. After expressing this opinion in the song, "O könnt' ich mich niederlegen" (II, 293-294), he states his plans for the future:

"'Und so', sagte er, 'will ich denn in dem noch unberührten Waldesgrün eines andern Welteils Herz und Augen stärken und mir die Ehre und die Erinnerung an die vergangene grosse Zeit, sowie den tiefen Schmerz über die gegenwärtige heilig bewahren, damit ich der künftigen, bessern, die wir alle hoffen, würdig bleibe, und sie mich wach und rüstig finde.'" (II, 294)

This statement apart from the plan of visiting the New World, is completely in harmony with Eichendorff's political and literary views. He does not, as is often claimed, renounce present and future in nostalgia for the
past, "die alte gute Zeit", as he often expresses it, but regards the grandeur of the past as an inspiration for present and future, particularly the latter. The present is never an end in itself, and never appeared satisfactory to Eichendorff after his student days, but is always merely the time during which one works towards improvement, both of oneself and, so far as it is possible, of one's country. Thus Leontin intends to preserve the memory of the glorious past and the ignominious present in the hope of achieving something worth while in the future. He retains his knightly ideals, but, finding they are unfashionable and subject to ridicule like the ludicrous aspects of Don Quixote, finds no alternative to withdrawing from his country until such time as knightly conduct shall again be in demand.

In "Ahnung und Gegenwart" Eichendorff considers the merits of a number of knights, without reaching the firm conclusions on knighthood which are to be found in his later novel, "Dichter und ihre Gesellen" (1834). The earlier novel has the virtue of youthful vitality and the drawback of youthful confusion. Though Eichendorff's principles are to be found in it, the reader has to search

13 Strange to say, all Eichendorff's references to Don Quixote pertain exclusively to the ridiculous or anachronistic aspects of this idealistic Knight.

14 "Dichter und ihre Gesellen" is discussed in Chapter IV of this study.
for them, and the fact that he took for his central character a young man whose choice of vocation, however laudable, did not enjoy his full sympathy, weakens the structure of the novel. For the real hero, in spite of Eichendorff's plans, is Leontin, who corresponds to Fortunat, the central figure of the second novel, and indeed to the poet or musician heroes of a number of his Novellen, who resemble their creator far more closely than Friedrich does. 15

Leontin appears to give up the military aspect of knighthood even as Rudolf and Friedrich do, but this situation, in his case, is temporary: having been outlawed by his country because of a misapprehension, he would be ill-advised to announce his presence to the army. There is no reason to believe, however, that, after his strategic withdrawal to America, he might not again bear arms for his country under improved circumstances. His religious faith never comes under suspicion (it was his singing of a hymn which rescued Friedrich from Romana's wiles), and after his war experiences he casts off the somewhat frivolous attitude to life which characterised his youth, and seeks for a way of helping his country. This is barred to him for the moment, but he is convinced that a time will come when his knightly principles will again be wanted for the

15This commentary should not be taken to mean that the present writer believes that heroes of novels should necessarily resemble their authors; it is merely a fact that Eichendorff's most successful and convincing heroes do resemble him strongly.
restoration of his land. He says in one of the last songs of the novel:

"Denn eine Zeit wird kommen,
Da macht der Herr ein End',
Da wird den Falschen genommen
Ihr unechtes Regiment.

Denn wie die Erze vom Hammer,
So wird das lockre Geschlecht
Gehaun sein von Not und Jammer
Zu festem Eisen recht.

Da wird Aurora tagen
Hoch über den Wald hinauf,
Da gibt's was zu siegen und schlagen,
Da wacht, ihr Getreuen, auf!" (II, 294)
IV. Das Marmorbild

(Summary. Florio, approaching Lucca on the grand tour, meets another knight, the poet Fortunato, who takes him to an evening party being held near the city. Here Florio falls in love with a young girl, Bianka. The company is joined by the knight, Donati, whose presence seems to disturb everyone but Florio, to whom he makes himself very agreeable.

Florio, restless after this festivity, goes for a walk in the country by moonlight. He comes to a neglected garden where he sees a statue apparently come to life. Eventually he again finds the garden, now well tended, by daylight, and sees a lady who resembles the statue wandering through it, singing. On attempting to overtake her, he finds Donati sleeping amongst some ruins. The knight promises to introduce him to the lady one day. At a masked ball, Florio again encounters the "statue", this time exactly like Bianka in appearance and costume, and has a short conversation with her.

Florio visits Donati, who takes him to the mysterious garden and leaves him with the lady and her attendants. Florio becomes more and more enamoured of her, and in the evening accompanies her indoors alone. While he is admiring her and her surroundings, he hears Fortunato singing a hymn outside, and prays not to be lost. Immediately a storm begins, signs of neglect appear outside the window, a green-golden snake vanishes into a clump of weeds, the lady looks white and rigid like a statue, and the whole house begins to collapse. Florio flees in horror, passing the site of Donati's splendid mansion, where now only a lowly hut stands.

Deciding to leave Lucca, Florio meets Fortunato with Pietro (Bianka's uncle and guardian) and an unknown young man, and is invited to accompany them on their travels. They pass by the garden, once more in ruins, and Fortunato tells the legend of Venus which is associated with it. Florio, now completely released from the enchantment, recognises the "young man" as Bianka, whose uncle was taking her on a journey to help her forget her grief over Florio's neglect of her. Florio says he hopes never to part from her again, and the party goes joyfully on its way.)

Gerhard Möbus, a contemporary critic of Eichendorff, writes:
"Wer sich um eine Deutung der Dichtung Eichendorffs bemüht, kommt, welchen Weg er auch einschlagen mag, immer wieder in die Nähe des "Marmorbildes". Erschliesst sich der Sinn dieses Werkes, das der Dichter selbst ein Märchen genannt hat, dann öffnet sich mit ihm zugleich der Zugang zum Gehalt des Gesamtwerkes."  

Hans Brandenburg, one of the first important critics of Eichendorff, whose indispensable biography of Eichendorff has been outstripped in many ways in regard to his criticism of the literary works, nevertheless gives an analysis of the theme of this Märchen which cannot be bettered:


Venus and Madonna figures have already appeared in the earlier works; the reader is ever conscious of the "Christusreich", and also of the "Bacchusreich". This term is used by Brandenburg because of the mention of Bacchus (and Venus) in Fortunato's song (II, 311-313), which describes Christ's overcoming of the ancient gods: by it he wishes to symbolise the pagan world (as represented


The text and notes of this book also contain excellent evaluations of other recent critical works on Eichendorff.
by Romana in the tableau in "Ahnung und Gegenwart" II, 129, which Eichendorff interprets as "die griechische Figur, die lebenslustige, vor dem Glanze des Christentums zu Stein gewordene Religion der Phantasie" I, 130) and also those daemonic forces which, even in the Christian world, will not subject themselves to Christian principles. The ancient gods, or at least the natural forces which they symbolize, have not really been overcome. They still exist in every human being, however firmly he may adhere to the Christian faith, and must constantly be overcome anew. In fact, taking Brandenburg's view of the hero of "Das Marmorbild" being placed between good and evil, and Möbus' view of this story as the key to all Eichendorff's literary works, one gains a perspective of countless heroes, of mankind, in fact, eternally at the crossroads between good and evil. Each new step may lead to either. The problem is not solved with one decision, though any one decision may turn out to be of overwhelming importance in determining the future direction of the individual's path.

In Florio's case, as in many others, the danger arises out of his own emotions. He reaches the outskirts of Lucca in his hitherto customary state of equanimity, but almost at once falls in love with the beautiful young Bianka. His feelings toward her are in no doubt at the time of his singing his toast, "Jeder nennet froh die Seine" (II, 310), yet, later in the same night, after a dream in which Bianka
has appeared, he sings a serenade, "Wie kühl schweift sich's bei näch'tger Stunde" (II, 317), whereupon Eichendorff writes:

"Er musste über sich selber lachen, da er am Ende nicht wusste, wem er das Ständchen brachte. Denn die reizende Kleine [Bianka] mit dem Blumenkranze war es lange nicht mehr, die er eigentlich meinte." (II, 317)

What has happened during these few hours to change his views so radically?

The source of the change can be traced to the one new character to enter the story between Florio's two songs: the knight, Donati (it should be pointed out here that Eichendorff no longer makes the distinction between "Reiter" and "Ritter" remarked upon in connection with "Ahnung und Gegenwart". Although the reader is never in any doubt as to Donati's character, he is referred to as a "Ritter" except at one moment where he is having difficulties with his horse and therefore "Reiter" is more apt (II, 315). During the interval between writing the two works, Eichendorff has shed all lingering illusion of the knight as essentially pure). Donati is branded as evil in the first sentence concerning him: "Da trat ein hoher, schlanker Ritter in reichem Geschmeide, das grünlichgoldene Scheine zwischen die im Walde flackernden Lichter warf, in das Zelt herein." (II, 314) An innocuous description; but to those who have observed the symbolism of the few colours mentioned by Eichendorff, "grünlichgoldenen" signals moral danger. This observation was mentioned in regard to the enchantress in
"Die Zauberei im Herbste", of whom is written: "die Aster von ihrer Stirne warf lange grünlich-goldene Scheine über die Heide" (II, 985). The association of this colour with evil is thus found in Eichendorff's first known work of any length, and also in one of his last, the verse epic, "Julian" (1853). In the twelfth canto of this epic, Oktavian comes to his senses in the garden of the temptress, Fausta, who bears a strong likeness to the enchantresses of "Die Zauberei im Herbste" and "Das Marmorbild":

"Dem Ritter graut' vor ihren Wangen,
Er sann, und wusst' nicht, wo er ist,
Doch wie er aufsprang, schlüpf'ten Schlangen
grüngolden züngelnd ins Genist." (I, 433)²

On the occasion when Florio, in Donati's company, meets the enchantress, he notices this: "ein Edelstein an ihrer Brust warf in der Abendsonne lange, grünlichgoldne Scheine über die Wiese hin" - almost the same words as in "Die Zauberei im Herbste" and in the reference in regard

²It is interesting to compare Eichendorff's attitude with that adopted by E.T.A. Hoffmann in his Der goldene Topf (Stuttgart: Reclam 1960), first published in 1814. The student, Anselmus, is sitting under an elderberry bush: "er schaute hinauf und erblickte drei in grünem Gold ergänzende: Schlänglein," (p.10) one of which, Serpentina, later becomes, in human form, his bride. Serpentina represents a fusion of mineral (the jewel-like glow of her reptilian form), plant (her mother, the lily), animal (her father, the salamander, who also appears in human form), and human; Hoffmann does not take religion into consideration in this phantasy. Such a fusion is foreshadowed in Novalis' Heinrich von Ofterdingen and Tieck's Der Runenfrey, but would be unthinkable to the conservative Catholic Eichendorff, for whom this world and heaven (and perhaps hell) exist separately, whereas Hoffmann's two worlds of reality and magic (the latter including the arts) exist together, overlapping in space and time.
to Donati. The final mention of the colour in "Das Marmorbild" is made just after Florio's prayer: "Herr Gott, lass mich nicht verlorengehen in der Welt" (II, 338)

A storm begins, and Florio notices surprising signs of neglect outside the window of the enchantress' house. "Eine Schlange fuhr zischend daraus hervor und stürzte mit dem grünlichgoldnen Schweife sich ringelnd in den Abgrund hinunter" (II, 338). Even without the reference to colour, the symbolism of this passage is clear: evil has been vanquished and cast into the abyss.

Josef Kunz comments on the subject of this colour:

"Von dem Geschmeide, das er (Donati) trägt, heisst es, dass es "grünlich goldene Scheine zwischen die im Winde flatternden Lichter warf". Das Gold, das an sich die Helle und das Strahlende des Lichtes bewahrt und ausstrahlt, erfährt so Schmälerung und Beeinträchtigung seines Glanzes durch die andere, mehr dem Dunkel verhaftete Farbe."

Whether this consideration or any other caused Eichendorff to regard green-gold with such abhorrence, the fact remains that he mentions this colour consistently with regard to
and that therefore the reader is warned of Donati's wickedness from the moment of his appearance.

This moment has a definite relationship to Florio's emotional state, for Donati appears not long after the young man has fallen in love for the first time, and hence has left the stage of childish simplicity to enter that of adolescent vulnerability. Eichendorff mentions "die dunkelglühenden Blicke" (II, 310) of Bianka towards Florio, an astonishing description of a girl whose name means "white" and who symbolizes pure womanhood, from an author who generally reserves this adjective for dark red objects, such as wine or peonies. It seems that he is hinting delicately that passion can exist in and be inspired by even the most innocent girl. Florio responds to this inspiration with an advance towards mature stability:

"Florio war recht innerlichst vergnügt, alle blöde Bangigkeit war von seiner Seele genommen, und er sah fast träumerisch still vor frühlichen Gedanken zwischen den Lichtern und Blumen in die wunderschöne, langsam in die Abendglüten versinkende Landschaft vor sich hinaus." (II, 310)

After Bianka's departure and his subsequent conversation with Donati, however, Florio becomes confused, shortly forgets Bianka (though her presence in his dream indicates

It is twice mentioned in the novel, "Dichter und ihre Gesellen", (II, 580 and 598), both times with a connotation of evil magic. "Goldgrün" occurs once in "Libertas und ihre Freier" (II, 959) with a connotation of magic but no evil.
that the forgetting is only at the conscious level), and feels an undirected longing which sends him out into the countryside. Here he first sees the deserted garden with the statue of Venus which appears momentarily to come to life in the shifting light of the moon amongst the clouds, and which dominates his thoughts and desires throughout the remainder of his stay in Lucca.

Donati's connection with the garden is not at first apparent, but when Florio succeeds in finding it by daylight, after numerous fruitless attempts, and sees the awakened statue walking amongst the exotic plants which have taken the place of the moonlit ruins, he finds Donati sleeping nearby "fast wie ein Toter" (II, 323), on some fallen stonework; and Donati takes him to the garden for his third and final visit. When Florio passes by the same place on his departure from Lucca, it is a lifeless ruin: therefore the semblance of life which the garden and the statue assumed must have depended on Donati, and has vanished with him. In turn, Donati's existence depends on Florio's vulnerability to temptation through his newly aroused sensuality: once Florio prays for help, he receives divine protection, and the evil forces arrayed against him disintegrate.

Although the action of the story takes place within a few days, Florio passes through three states of emotional development within this time, from childish
innocence through adolescent vulnerability to maturity. He has still not advanced emotionally beyond the innocence of childhood when he says to Fortunato:

"Auf dem Lande in der Stille aufgewachsen, wie lange habe ich da die fernen blauen Berge sehnsüchtig betrachtet, wenn der Frühling wie ein zauberischer Spielmann durch unsern Garten ging und von der wunderschönen Ferne verlockend sang und von grosser, unermesslicher Lust." (II, 308)

He has obviously no perception of the danger inherent in the temptation and pleasure of which the "Spielmann" sings. The older and more experienced Fortunato is taken aback by this naivety, and seeks to warn his young friend without alarming him:

"'Habt Ihr wohl jemals', sagte er zerstreut, aber sehr ernsthaft, 'von dem wunderbaren Spielmann gehört, der durch seine Töne die Jugend in einen Zauberberg hinein verlockt, aus dem keiner wieder zurückgekehrt ist? Hütet Euch!'" (II, 308)

The reference here is obviously to Tieck's "Der getreue Eckart und der Tannenhäuser". The influence of this tale is more apparent but not openly acknowledged in "Die Zauberei im Herbst", whose plot is basically the same as that of the second part of Tieck's Märchen. In both the Tieck and the earlier of Eichendorff's tales, the music of temptation is given an objective quality, because it is perceived by many. In Tieck's tale, it is heard only by those who have already given themselves up to temptation, and none who hears it can resist; but even his unfortunate Friedrich, who has led a blameless life, is doomed because Tannenhäuser kissed him
before his flight back to the Hörselberg. In "Die Zauberei im Herbst", the music is heard by all, but can be resisted by those with a strong faith: Ubaldo and Berta remain steadfast while Raimund succumbs. Thus, though the music apparently exists objectively, the reaction of the hearer is subject to his religious conviction or lack of it, unlike that of Tieck's characters.

"Das Marmorbild", fundamentally a third version of the same story but broadened and immensely improved, does not have music as the medium of enchantment. Instead, as in "Ahnung und Gegenwart" and all subsequent prose narratives, songs are simply used to express the feelings or thoughts of the singer; in fact, the songs in "Die Zauberei im Herbst" serve this purpose also, but that of the enchantress has the additional function of luring the susceptible to their doom.

5 Ludwig Tieck, Der getreue Eckart und der Tannenhäuser, in Deutsche Literatur, Reihe Romantik, VII (Leipzig, 1933), p. 269.

6 Möbus (op. cit., p. 88) gives Friedrich Kind's story, "Das Prinzen-Bank", Tulpen, VII (Leipzig, 1810), as an additional source for "Das Marmorbild". There are several striking correspondences between the two stories; however, Möbus' conclusion that Eichendorff's idea of bringing the statue to life is drawn from Kind's idea of bringing the corpse of Helen of Troy to life, is open to question. Eichendorff had already used the idea of a destructive spirit which dies physically and is resurrected in "Die Zauberei im Herbst", written at least a year before the publication of Kind's story, though the enchantress is not described as a remnant of classical antiquity. Other details may have been copied by Eichendorff, consciously or otherwise. Eichendorff himself wrote to Tieck in a letter quoted in part by Möbus on p. 79, that Happel's Relationes curiosae furnished the impetus for his tale; and an account of Happel's ghost story, in which the evil Donati first appeared, was published by Kind in the same volume of Tulpen as "Der Fremde in Lucca". This latter tale may have influenced some details of "Das Marmorbild".
as do the hunting horns and birdsong associated with her. In "Das Marmorbild", the apparatus of temptation can all be ascribed to an illusion arising out of Florio's advancement to the stage of sensual awareness and susceptibility. Apart from this illusion, Eichendorff never abandons what one might call the "romantic realism" characterising much of his work: even the magic in his first tale is not essential to the plot, but can also be interpreted as an illusion, whereas the works of many other Romantic writers depend upon magic: for instance, Hoffmann's "Der goldene Topf", mentioned above, is only one of many stories in which this author minglest inextricably the worlds of magic and of ordinary life. (For those readers who would reject the term "realism" as applied to the prose works of Eichendorff, especially in regard to "Aus dem Leben eines Taugenichts", it should be pointed out that although the Taugenichts' adventures are unlikely, they are cast in terms of reality; on the other hand, events in "Auch ich war in Arkadien" (1834) and "Libertas und ihre Freier" (1849) certainly do not fit into this framework despite the seriousness of the ideas underlying them.)

Florio's state of childlike innocence ends at his meeting with Bianka. Having fallen in love, he is now vulnerable to sensual temptation, and promptly, like an emissary from the devil, Donati appears, ready to lead the young knight astray.

Sensual awareness, like other natural forces, is
not in itself evil, but without proper control can lead to evil. Here we have the young knight, as Brandenburg says, placed between the good and evil knights, and feeling uneasy when he is left alone with them. It is noteworthy that Donati pays no attention to anyone but Florio, whom it is his mission to corrupt, and no one but Florio speaks to him, though all feel uneasy in his presence; he never addresses Fortunato, who symbolizes good as Donati symbolizes evil. Fortunato has the advantage of being real as well as symbolic; his hymn, sung in the real ruined garden, checks Florio on the brink of perdition. Florio turns from the seductress in her elaborate room, to the window, a characteristic gesture of Eichendorff's figures, who mostly turn away from the artificiality of the man-made world to the great realm of nature, the creation of God. Yet Fortunato's influence is not enough, in itself, to save Florio: the impulse must come from within; and it is not until Florio utters his few words of prayer that the influence of evil is averted. Immediately after his prayer, the snake appears and vanishes into a crevice: this incident is a "Symbol der Symbole", to quote Brandenburg again, the snake being a symbol of the power of Donati, who himself is merely a symbol of evil. With the vanquishing of evil, the enchantress' house begins to collapse, and Florio flees. He has passed through the second stage, that of adolescent vulnerability, and is about

7 Even so did Leontin's song rescue Friedrich from Romana's evil influence (II, 160).
to enter the third stage of stable maturity like that of Fortunato, both deriving their ability to gain and adhere to this stage of development from their firm Christian faith.

Wilhelm Emrich says in "Eichendorff, Skizze einer Ästhetik der Geschichte": "Das Marmorbild vertritt die Idee der erstarrten Vergangenheit..., um dann als lebendig singende Frau plötzlich allegorisch Wahrheit und Ewigkeit alles vergangenen Seins überhaupt in ihren eigenen Worten zu beschwören....Es ist Urform aller Geschichte, d.h. Allegorie" (p. 15). The present writer does not feel that the statue represents history, even Florio's own history, since its apparently living form is a conjuration made by a conjuration (Donati) of his own emotions when he advances beyond his childhood (his past up to that point) on falling in love with Bianka. However, Emrich is not alone in equating the statue with the past: Kunz writes: "In dieser für sein Leben so bedeutsamen Stunde begegnet also Florio dem Wesen, das, Spiegelung seiner eigenen Situation, verzaubert ist in den eigenen Ursprung, wie er nicht die Kraft hat, sich diesem Zauber zu entwinden und seine Weigerung mit der Leblosigkeit und Starrheit bezahlt. Denn Leben ist nur möglich, wo die Spannung von Ursprung und Ziel ausgehalten wird; Leben - und um diesen Gedanken kreist ja Eichendorffs Denken immer wieder -

verdankt seine Intensität und Frische nur dem Schritt, den der Mensch wagt in das Neue, sich damit loslösend von der ewigen Wiederholung des Anfangs" (op. cit., 163-164). Kunz has much that is new, penetrating, and illuminating to say about Eichendorff, but in the above quotation it is apparent that it is his own thinking, not Eichendorff's, which centres upon the danger of remaining tied to one's origin. Although Eichendorff's characters generally do venture forth into something new, it is not through rejection of their childhood and "Heimat", but in extension of them in a manner befitting greater maturity. The statue reflects Florio's new emotional state, not his origin.

From the conversation near the end of "Das Marmorbild" and Fortunato's song on the subject (II, 341-343), it is apparent that a Tannenhäuser-like legend is attached to the abandoned garden and its ruined temple of Venus. This serves as a superficial explanation of Florio's adventures; nevertheless, he first hears of the legend after these phenomena are past, and therefore they must be regarded as an independent projection of his emotional problems. Once the problems are dealt with, the ever more elaborate projection of them capsizes, leaving no trace except in Florio's mind and in Bianka's grief at believing he has forgotten her.

Despite the unreality of these adventures, Florio benefits greatly from them and will henceforth be a much more worthy knight than previously, having had overwhelming
proof of the efficacy of prayer (though even in Eichendorff not all prayers are answered with such spectacular speed) and the reward of virtue. The reader feels assured that he will develop into as fine an example of his class as Fortunato, with the added advantage of a beautiful and devoted wife.

The most interesting figure in regard to knighthood is Donati. The treatment of this character, however unreal he may be, provides a striking contrast to the usual conception of the knight as an ideal. He is never described in terms that might lead the reader to admire him: his only knighthly virtues appear to be excellent horsemanship, good manners (though these are intermittent), and the wealth which was the outward manifestation of spiritual greatness in the mediaeval view of the knight. In fact, it is only in the lesser, expendable virtues that he shows any proof of knighthood: in the greater virtues, especially faith, he is totally deficient.

The change of Eichendorff's attitude to a "schwarzer Ritter" is interesting. During his visit to Breslau in 1809 with his brother, Wilhelm, he made the following entry in his diary on 3 November:

"Liess mich von dem nicht ganz talentlosen Maler R a a b e auf der Taschengasse e n M i n i a t u r e als schwarzer Ritter mit goldner Kette u. Stickerei für L [ouise] malen." (III, 222)

Manifestly the black clothing here has no other significance
than to serve as a foil to his own fair good looks. But a wealth of emotional overtones is aroused when, ten years later, he describes Donati in the same attire:


Eichendorff himself "als schwarzer Ritter" was just a handsome young man being portrayed in clothing befitting his rank - an Elizabethan velvet doublet with a modest ruff. But Donati in black is another matter entirely. He is a "schwarzer Ritter" with the pejorative qualities which traditionally attach to black: evil and grief. He is in mourning for a strange reason: apparently he cannot cause the enchantress to use her wiles on Sunday, though he tries to soften this blow by offering a hunt as consolation. But the mourning has a reverse significance related to the evil associated with black: he causes grief to others. He plans to bring Florio to disaster; through Florio's danger Fortunato is distressed, Bianka heartbroken and her uncle Pietro worried on her account.

The association of black with evil and with mourning for an obscure cause was already made in "Ahnung und Gegenwart". Two incidents involving Rudolf clad in
black were mentioned in Chapter II. In the first (II, 113), Rudolf attended a masked ball in a black knight's costume adorned with skeleton hands, his effect on the guests being much like that of Donati at the fête champêtre, namely, to cause perturbation, though the reason for this is due to the costume in Rudolf's case and to evil character in Donati's; Rudolf's intention is to call sinners to repentance. In the second instance (II, 278), Rudolf quite by chance picks up a black "Rittertracht" belonging to Angelina's husband whom he inadvertently kills. It is difficult to interpret the significance of the costume on this occasion, though one can be sure that, because of Eichendorff's sparing and symbolic use of colour, a significance was intended. Perhaps it is that the guilt in this manslaughter, like the costume, belongs to the husband. Certainly tragedy results from Rudolf's borrowing the "Rittertracht", and grief and horror are brought to him and Angelina.

A further example in this novel of the wearing of black for a strange reason is Romana's appearance at the Minister's evening party: "Sie war schwarz angezogen und fast furchtbar schön anzusehen." (II, 163) Several people speak to her, but:

"Romana antwortete nichts, sondern setzte sich an den Flügel und sang ein wildes Lied, das nur aus dem tiefsten Jammer einer zerrissenen Seele kommen konnte. 'Ist das nicht schön?' fragte sie einige Male dazwischen, sich mit Tränen in den Augen zu Friedrich herumwendend und lachte abscheulich dabei...Friedrich bemerkte, dass Romana zitterte." (II, 164)
The reason for this display of grief is to be found a little earlier in the novel, on the occasion of her attempted seduction of Friedrich, to whom she says: "Wenn ich mich einmal recht verliebte, es wärde mich gewiss das Leben kosten" (II,158). After this she appears "totenblass" (II, 159), an appropriate symptom in one who has just made an accurate prophecy. For she has already fallen seriously in love with Friedrich, subsequently dresses in black to express her despair at his rejection of her, and eventually takes her own life to put an end to her grief.

Donati shows no such immoderate emotion on the failure of his plan to ensnare Florio; in fact, his last appearance in "Das Marmorbild" occurs when he hands the young knight over to the enchantress, confident that his wiles are about to succeed. As we have seen, when Florio rallies enough to make his prayer and thus destroy the power of evil, the snake slithers from the wall and vanishes, neatly and unmistakably symbolizing the defeat of evil— in this instance, of Florio's lower nature.

Donati as a "schwarzer Ritter" may not be the most memorable figure to anyone reading this Märchen simply for pleasure in its beauty, but he certainly is important in being Eichendorff's first portrayal of a knight who is unmistakably bad from the beginning. The fact that he is depicted as a creation of Florio's imagination is insignificant in this regard: what matters is that Donati makes his appearance as a member of the knightly class, and as such is
a disgrace to the ideals of chivalry. Eichendorff has shown once more that the figure of the knight does not necessarily represent the highest ideals of chivalry: there are unworthy knights who not only lack faith but even, as in the case of Donati, incorporate evil. Here the knight is not merely a problematic figure like Raimund or Rudolf, but represents the essence of evil, whereas he should strive ceaselessly to uphold the highest ideals of knighthood. Eichendorff has not yet formulated the corollary to this thought, namely, that persons of lower birth may be chivalrous through the nobility of their character, as he does later in "Viel Lärmen um nichts" (1832), "Das Schloss Dürande (1837), "Die Glücksritter" (1841), and "Robert und Guiscard" (1855), each of which works represents a broadening of his outlook. But the brevity, lucidity and balance of "Das Marmorbild" reveal his philosophy with no ambiguity, once the reader has recognized that the phantastic elements are "Symbole der Symbole". Möbus and Brandenburg between them have defined the scope and importance of this work.

"Das Marmorbild" ends on a much happier and more confident note than "Ahnung und Gegenwart", partly, no doubt, because it does not touch on political considerations, but concentrates entirely on the eternal moral problems of mankind. Two poems from these works sum up the outlook of the author in 1812 and 1819. The first, from "Ahnung und Gegenwart", sung by Leontin outside Romana's "Schloss"
just in time to rescue Friedrich from temptation, starts: "Vergangen ist der lichte Tag" (II, 160). In it Leontin considers the dangers and fears which beset mankind at night, with God's care the only protection until morning. The second, a quatrain sung by a peasant after Florio has withstood his trial successfully, begins with a closely contrasting line, but expresses the joy of that trust in God which overcomes evil:

"Vergangen ist die finstre Nacht,  
Des Bösen Trug und Zaubermacht,  
Zur Arbeit weckt der lichte Tag;  
Frisch auf, wer Gott noch loben mag!" (II, 340)
V. Dichter und ihre Gesellen

(Summary. Book I. Fortunat accompanies his friend Walter to the home of the latter's fiancée, Florentine, whose father is bailiff to Graf Victor von Hohenstein, a famous poet. Florentine's cousin Otto, having just finished at university, wishes to be a poet like Victor, but Walter persuades him to undertake something more practical. Walter returns to the city, and Fortunat continues his travels, falling in with a company of strolling players, including the "Literatus", Lothario, who had conducted Fortunat around the garden of the absent Victor, and the "Musikus", Dryander.

The company is invited to perform at the Fürst's country seat, on the way to which Lothario rescues a beautiful rider in difficulties. Fortunat is invited to stay at the castle, unlike the players, who have quarters elsewhere. His first acquaintance here is the painter, Guido, whose attitude to art is much like his own, in contrast to a second painter, Albert, who cannot let anyone forget that he fought in 1813, and loudly praises everything North German. One of the guests of the Fürstin is the rescued rider, the Spanish Gräfin Juanna, who attracts and rejects all the men. Soon Otto joins the players, having given up his boring studies to continue with his poetry. He is in love with the actress, Kordelchen.

The princely party goes hunting, and takes refuge from a storm in the tumbledown castle of Baron Eberstein, whose daughter, Gertrud, sings at the Fürst's request. Then the English Lord, another guest of the Fürst, tells "The Story of the Wild Spanish Lady", half fairy tale, half war adventure story, which seems to have some relation to Juanna.

Otto reads his drama to the company's director, who praises it faintly. This rebuff and Kordelchen's unfaithfulness depress Otto, but Lothario advises him to write to Hohenstein for money so that he can continue to write. Baron Eberstein and Gertrud come to visit relatives, and Dryander, who has become court poet, shows considerable interest in the girl, though he had talked himself into and out of love with the Fürstin a short time earlier. On a hunt, Juanna plans to evade the Fürstin's attempt to provide her with a suitable husband, by escaping to a convent, but she is diverted by a chamois and gets into difficulties. Lothario rescues her once more and then tries to abduct her, but in order to elude him she makes her horse jump into the river. This time his efforts to save her are unsuccessful, and she drowns.
Book II. Fortunat stays in Rome at the home of the impoverished Marchese A., with whose young daughter, Fiametta, he falls in love. His friend, Grundling, takes him to a little house where Kordelchen is living with Guido. Here Grundling tells a burlesque version of the Lord's story of the Spanish lady. Otto has made himself at home in Italy to the extent of renouncing his German heritage and marrying an Italian girl, Annidi; on finding her faithless, he sets off for Germany again with Kordelchen.

Fortunat, believing Fiametta loves another, travels in Naples and Sicily. On his return to Rome, he finds the Marchese's palace empty, the old gentleman having become bankrupt and gone away with his daughter, who had fallen ill after Fortunat's departure. Fortunat buys the palace, installs Grundling as caretaker, and sets off in search of his beloved.

Book III. Lothario comes to the capital of the Fürst, who has lost his mind. The poet pursues his craft in an inn, but feels the devil is encouraging him to mislead his readers, and gives up in horror. He looks in at a performance of a play by Graf Victor von Hohenstein - and receives an ovation as its author. The applause repels him, the more so as the play is the true story of Juanna, in which he himself had taken part as the English Lord had recounted. Victor, hitherto known to the reader as Lothario, rushes from the theatre and encounters Kordelchen, who begs him not to leave her again, as she has always been true to him in her heart. He, however, sets forth again, feeling that he must make a fresh start. She subsequently goes mad.

Otto experiences a rather sordid repetition of the "Zauberei im Herbste" theme, falls ill, repents, and sets off for home, visiting the mountain of the hermit, Vitalis, on his way. On the mountain he falls asleep and dies peacefully.

Fortunat finds Fiametta in an inn. She and her maid have been looking for him to rescue her from the plans for her marriage being made by her kinsman, Baron Manfred, her guardian since the death of her father. Fortunat takes her to Hohenstein, where Walter and Florentine, now a married couple with a baby, can look after her while he seeks permission to marry her.

The principal characters all meet at Otto's grave, then proceed to the abandoned monastery where the hermit, a former monk, marries Fortunat and Fiametta with Manfred's approval. With the real hermit is the supposed hermit, Vitalis, who is in fact Victor, in retirement prior to becoming a priest. The wedding breakfast is enjoyed by the bridal couple, the two priests, actual and prospective,
Manfred, Walter, and for a time the ubiquitous Dryander.

Victor speaks of his hope of converting the cultured European heathen, Manfred of his plans for government service. Fortunat will return to Italy with Fiametta and continue to write poetry. As the friends part at sunrise, Victor climbs upward; and Dryander is seen far below playing the violin at the head of a troupe of actors. The novel closes to the strains of the hermit's song on the vanity of the world.)

Eichendorff's second novel, "Dichter und ihre Gesellen" (1834), is in many ways a repetition of the earlier "Ahnung und Gegenwart" (1815). Both begin with a young man taking the grand tour, and follow his adventures and those of his friends to their point of decision as to their vocation, and their separation. Both have the same cyclical structure divided into three books, and end with a wedding on a mountain top followed by a night-long open-air discussion amongst the most important characters, including one who is entering the profession of priesthood. Both finish with that sunrise which, in Eichendorff, almost always implies a new beginning, and in both the priest watches the rest of the characters proceeding down to the level of ordinary life. Both centre on Eichendorff's main concerns: religion and poetry. The philosophy underlying the two novels is essentially the same, but in the long interval separating their composition, the author's ideas have crystallized, and various problems which he still had not resolved satisfactorily in the earlier work, are clarified in the later one.

In regard to knighthood, Eichendorff rejects more emphatically in the second novel the retention of those
outward aspects of chivalry which have become meaningless in a changed society. "Der Maler Albert", one of the two artists living at the Fürst's country house, draws the author's fire particularly in this respect, and also is a prey to what Eichendorff called "Vaterländerei" (II, 296), here expressed in Albert's undiscriminating praise of everything North German. Fortunat expresses Eichendorff's views on the needlessness of boasting about service to one's country when Albert shows him his studio. Albert is a caricature of the pre-Christian hero of Germanic literature, for whom it was compulsory to sing his own praises, whereas Fortunat represents the modern, modest knight who carries out his duties quietly:


"...Da waren die ungeheuersten Anstalten zur Kunst ..., dazwischen mehrere vollendete Bilder, Historienstücke aus der antiken Heroenzeit von sehr zusammengesetzter, studierter und nicht leicht fasslicher Komposition... diese anmässlichen, affektierten Heldengestalten voll Männerstolz wollten ihm [Fortunat] nicht im mindesten behagen...."

"...Zuletzt musste er laut auflachen über den wunderlichen Zorn, in den ihn das
"Larvenkunstkabinett des Malers versetzt hatte. Die Morgensonne spielte golden durch die Wipfel der Bäume und unzählige Vögel sangen. Er blickte fröhlich umher und fand, dass die Welt trotz allen Narren so schön und lustig blieb, wie sie war." (II, 560-562)

This episode illustrates clearly Eichendorff's ability to use a comic incident for the expression of serious ideas. Albert's thoughts are not all foolish: the "schlaffe Ruh" he seeks to avoid is a constant object of Eichendorff's disapproval; but Albert exaggerates a few sound ideas to the point of ludicrous parody. It is not surprising that such an unrestrained opponent of all things southern, in which the painter includes the Roman Catholic Church, becomes a Carbonaro, and, on the failure of this venture, takes his own life with his fetish, his "Schwert vom Jahre 1813". And in this character, incidentally, Eichendorff quietly satirizes those aspects of Protestant Prussia which he found uncongenial, while giving it due credit for its share in the Wars of Liberation.

Fortunat, on the other hand, the central character of the novel, opposes the sterile clinging to past glory which brings about Albert's downfall, and turns to nature for inspiration and refreshment: its eternally renewed beauty reflects the glory of God far better than any mere human art can do.

Baron Eberstein has taken the opposite attitude to Albert's: he has let everything go to rack and ruin,
his neglect of his knighthood being symbolized by the coat-of-arms over his gate, in whose helmet sparrows make their home. As in "Ahnung und Gegenwart", this symbol may have the additional meaning of extinction of an ancient name, since the Baron's only child is a daughter. This former officer experiences a brief resurgence of chivalrous behaviour during the unexpected visit of the Fürst with his hunting party, seeking shelter from a storm. Even this episode is marred by ludicrous incidents, such as the Fürstin's replying in German to his ceremonious questions in French, and the breaking out of a dog fight almost under their feet. Subsequently he reverts to the uncouth state in which we first found him, and worse, as he drives his quite commonplace but pleasant daughter into a disastrous marriage with the ebullient poet and vagabond, Dryander. Baron Eberstein is an extreme example of a knight degenerating to an almost sub-human level, indeed going over to the camp of the "Philister", whom Eichendorff despised as almost the antithesis of the knightly ideal, being an incarnation of the "schlaffe Ruhe" which he detested.

As in "Ahnung und Gegenwart", the person who should most strictly uphold the ideals of chivalry is the one who falls farthest away from them. The case is more deplorable in the later novel inasmuch as the character in question is a reigning prince, not merely a crown prince, and that his excesses lead him eventually to madness (We know nothing of
the life of the Erbprinz after his marriage to Rosa.

Eichendorff certainly put not his trust in princes, for Prince Románo in "Viel Lärmen um nichts" is another example, like the two mentioned above, of a character who allows his whims and emotions untrammelled freedom.

The Fürst of "Dichter und ihre Gesellen" is a minor figure, whose amorousness actually appears in the novel only in his pursuit of Juanna, in which disreputable activity almost all the male characters are engaged, Fortunat and the painter Guido, the true artists, being amongst the exceptions. Juanna rejects his advances very simply and effectively by leading him to the cottage of a girl whom he has seduced and abandoned and who is now mad. Madness is his own destiny, as Eichendorff relates:

"Zwischen Genuss und Reue, Lust und Grauen war er allmählich immer tiefer hinabgestiegen in die schimmernden Abgründe, wo mit verlockendem Gesang die Nixen im Mondenscheine auf den Klippen ihr feuchtes Haar kämm'en, das ferne Wetterleucht'en der Religion verwirrte ihn nur noch mehr; so hatte er sich im schönen Leben verirrt und konnte sich nicht wieder nach Hause finden. Da schlug die himmlische Liebe ihren Sternenmantel um den Todmüden. Er verfiel in eine schwere Krankheit, und als er wieder genas, war auf einmal alles vorbei. Die Leute nannten ihn wahnsinnig, er aber war vergnügt und blätterte Tag für Tag mit stiller, herzlicher Lust in den alten Bilderbüchern, die er als Kind gelesen; alles andere hatte er vergessen." (II, 648)

The first sentence of this excerpt is typical of Eichendorff's philosophy and of his artistry: the shimmering abysses whence comes music to lure away the heedless one so
that he becomes lost and cannot find his way home. "Nach Hause" is used, like his interpretation of "Heimat", to mean home, childhood, or heaven.

In the second sentence, an element new to Eichendorff's narrative prose is introduced: grace is granted to a sinner. There was a hint of this in "Ahnung und Gegenwart" after the death of Romana who had previously uttered nearly the same words as in the above paragraph:

"Ich habe mich hier oben verirrt, ich weiss den Weg nicht mehr nach Hause" (II, 222). This is literally true, but also has the same symbolic significance as the Fürst's losing his way. Friedrich finds her dead:

"Ihm überfiel im ersten Augenblicke ein seltsamer Zorn, er fasste sie in beide Arme, als müsste er sie mit Gewalt noch dem Teufel entreissen. Aber das wilde Spiel war für immer verspielt, sie hatte sich gerade ins Herz geschossen. Der müde Leib ruhte schön und fromm, da ihn die heidnische Seele nicht mehr regierte. Er kniete neben ihr hin und betete für sie aus Herzensgrunde." (II, 224)

Here is a strange and striking description of the pious body and heathen soul: the body is as God made it, but the soul had deliberately abandoned itself to evil. Romana's song, "Laue Luft kommt blau geflossen" (II, 124), comes to mind, with the opening line of its defiant second stanza, "Und ich mag mich nicht bewahren!"

Although Eichendorff would obviously have liked to save the soul of someone so richly talented as Romana, he did not quite feel the confidence to do so in this early
novel. Salvation could come only to the righteous, or to the formally repentant sinner, as we may assume Rosa to be from her participation in the pilgrimage at the end of the novel. But the mellowing effect of experience caused a change in this attitude, as is to be seen also in the conclusion of his first historical tragedy, "Ezelin von Romano" (1828). Ezelin's only virtue, if such it may be called, is that he is an astute general; but his astuteness is employed solely to increase his own power with a view to proclaiming himself Holy Roman Emperor (The action of the play takes place during the Interregnum.). The monk, Antonio, attempts to bring Ezelin to repentance; failing to do so, Antonio departs with the words: "Hier reicht kein Mensch mehr aus - so gnad' dir Gott" (I, 766); In a later scene highly reminiscent of Gretchen at mass in Faust I, with a chorus outside singing about the Day of Judgment, Ezelin admits the justice of Antonio's arguments, and dies saying, "Hier bin ich, Herr" (I, 796)! (which words also form the opening of Florio's song (II, 345) in "Das Marmorbild", after he has escaped from evil). The guard and the choir both pray for grace for him. He has acknowledged his sins and declared himself ready to submit to judgment, not formally to a priest, but merely in a spontaneous prayer in the very last moment of his life. Only grace can save him; the tone of the scene implies that it will be granted.
Having once adopted this principle of salvation by grace, Eichendorff continues to employ it. The Fürst obviously never repents sincerely, yet he receives grace, perhaps with his madness as propitiation for his sins: "Da schlug die himmlische Liebe ihren Sternenmantel um den Todmüden" (II, 648).

A similar end is provided for Otto, not a knight, but a poet and companion of various knights. Otto vacillates, like the Fürst, between dissipation and regret, and also between literature and jurisprudence. In his final state of repentance he proceeds towards his old home, and is led by an angelic child to a mountain where he can overlook his home and where he has a vision of Rome. Here he lies down and dies.

Neither Otto nor Dryander has any claim to knighthood, but both have a claim to be ranked with knights. An early sonnet (c. 1809) of Eichendorff's on the mission of the poet contains the line: "Das Leben hat zum Ritter ihm geschlagen" (I, 70). (It also contains the phrase, "Hie bin ich Herr!" remarked upon above.) Friedrich, in "Ahnung und Gegenwart", speaking of poetry, refers to "ihre angeboren Ritter, die Dichter" (II, 32). But the real reason for including these two unsatisfactory poets amongst the élite is their being able to find their way to the priest, Vitalis, on his mountain top. This mountain is not a mere geographical phenomenon, but a symbol of spiritual
eminence. Eichendorff writes: "Unerwartet waren sie hier auf einer jener Zinnen des Lebens zusammengekommen, die immer nur für wenige Raum hat" (II, 719). Neither Otto nor Dryander displays any moral superiority; therefore it must be the fact that they are poets which renders them eligible for this distinction, even though they are far from being great poets. Nevertheless, their being able to compose poetry at all immediately raises them above the ordinary level: Eichendorff considered that poets have a mission almost as important as that of the clergy. One might say more important, except that it is in both novels the priest who remains on the heights, and in "Dichter und ihre Gesellen" the priority of priestlyhood is emphasised by the dwelling there of the hermit who, though a priest, is certainly no poet. The apparent pre-eminence of the poet in Eichendorff's works is merely due to his taste in subject matter.

Otto reaches Vitalis, but is ordered away, though he again climbs the mountain, where he dies and is buried. His repulsion is probably due to his moral and artistic inferiority. Readers of Eichendorff notice, perhaps with amusement or irritation, that the poems in the novels and Novellen are almost always sung to an instrumental accompaniment; the author considers it worthy of remark if the circumstances are different. Once, in "Ahnung und Gegenwart", Friedrich hears Erwin singing "ohne alle Begleitung eines Instrumentes" (II, 177). Faber, the
professional poet whose attitude to his art is denounced by the egregious Friedrich early in the novel (though at the end Faber assumes to some extent the role of Eichendorff's mouthpiece), merely recites the last poem attributed to him in the book (II, 296). Otto sinks even lower: the only poems ascribed to him (II, 637-638) are written. No one knew better than Eichendorff that good poetry must not only be written, but also rewritten and polished endlessly. Nevertheless, it is his literary convention that his characters must sing their poems extempore to the accompaniment of a musical instrument, usually a guitar or a lute. Thus the reader observes Florio in "Das Marmorbild" setting out for a country walk in the middle of the night with a guitar slung about him (II, 316).

Dryander does not display the same moral weakness as Otto; in fact, he is an amoral character, reminding the reader of Puck and Ariel: even his name suggests a male wood-spirit; only his hearty appetite is corporeal: Eichendorff himself refers to him as an "Irrlicht" (II, 725). He is a comical, chameleon-like character, reflecting the mood of his surroundings. His lack of poetical greatness is indicated by the vertigo which overcomes him in the abandoned monastery which is Vitalis' temporary abode. However, he manages to find his way as far as the hermit's

1 The name "Dryander" may be derived from the Greek ἄρπὸς, a tree-spirit, and ἀνδριδίος, masculine.
dwelling a little lower down on at least two occasions, and therefore we must admit his claim to being a poet, mercurial though he is.

The remaining characters who succeed in attaining the heights are three knights and a lady: Vitalis, of course, Fortunat and his bride Fiametta, and Manfred (It had also become the permanent home of the hermit before Vitalis' arrival: in fact, he had been "Frater Sammler" in the ruined monastery before its suppression, and chose to remain behind in solitude when the other monks left.). Of these, Manfred is the least important: although very successful in the management of his lands, and destined for important service to the state, he is not a poet, and therefore has only a small part to play in a novel concerned mainly with poets. However, as a knight he fulfills all his obligations: the reader knows he is about to enter an important government position, such as Friedrich in "Ahnung und Gegenwart" vainly prepared for (even as Eichendorff did in life, though he did not know, at the time of writing the earlier novel, that his hopes would always be disappointed). Manfred's military service and religious faith are not specifically mentioned, but, with Fortunat, we can say, "das versteht sich ja ganz von selbst" (II, 560). His acceptance of social obligations is amply proved by his intended political service, his restoration to prosperity of the lands and villages which had been in poor condition when he inherited them, and his concern for his
young kinswoman, the Marchesin Fiametta.

Fiametta, like Julie in the earlier novel, is allowed to transcend the ordinary run of women, who, Eichendorff considered, should remain in the home. Even these heroines are only allowed to reach the heights on the strict understanding that they will marry and be subordinate ever after. Romana, in the earlier novel, is an outstanding character, but debarred from spiritual greatness by her immorality. Juanna, in the later novel, is not a poet, nor is she sinful like Romana; but, though also an imposing character, she is equally repellent to Eichendorff in that she is not content to accept the ordinary lot of women, and refuses to take a husband. She admittedly displays an arrogance which would be equally deplorable in a man, and also a certain weakness of character which indirectly brings about her doom: on her way to a convent to escape her horde of suitors, she allows herself to be diverted by the sport of chasing a chamois, and is lost, literally and figuratively. Lothario finds and rescues her (for the second time), but he then seeks to abduct her, believing, perhaps sincerely, that this is the only means of winning the heart of such a cold Diana. In this he is mistaken: at the first opportunity she makes her horse jump down into a river, where she drowns despite Lothario's attempts to save her. Although she has a taste for the heights, they bring her to disaster.

Fiametta's and Julie's equality to the knights,
which enables them to reach, and for a time to remain on, the
summit, arises from two things: firstly, they are poets,
Fiametta being the singer of one of Eichendorff's loveliest
lyrics, "Es schienen so golden die Sterne" (II, 711); and
secondly, they conform to Eichendorff's ideal of young
womanhood, being not only beautiful, lively, talented and
resourceful, but also sweet, pure, and well-behaved.

The hermit is the permanent resident of the
mountain-top, but even higher than his dwelling is the
abandoned monastery, temporarily inhabited by the priest,
Vitalis. This character has been several times mentioned in
this chapter under this and his other pseudonym of Lothario.
He is really Graf Victor² von Hohenstein, who, after a
successful career as an officer in Spain and a poet at home,
joins a troupe of strolling players as Lothario, poet and
player. During this period he leads the dissipated life
implied by this name in English (Lothario in Goethe's
"Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre" also belongs in this libertine
category), his crowning folly being the attempted abduction
of Juanna which results in her death. The shock of this
virtual murder (in which he is far more guilty than Rudolf
in the death of his incubus, who rushes on the sword Rudolf
has drawn in self-defence) causes him to flee. Eventually

²The Latin spelling here suggests that the etymological
significance of the name is to be observed; it is not with
Viktor in "Ahnung und Gegenwart".
he comes by chance upon the hermit, whose humility and simplicity set his feet on the path to the priesthood, the vital mission which gives him his third name, expressing his concern with the spiritual life which should permeate terrestrial life.

Victor is the most complex of Eichendorff's creations. His true name signifies triumph and an exalted position. In his own right he succeeds both as a knight and as a poet, but his energetic personality is not satisfied with ordinary life, in spite of the high reputation he has acquired both as an officer in the Wars of Liberation in Spain and as a poet. He tries a new life in a lower station, in which he finds considerable amusement but also falls into mischief and real guilt, not only towards Juanna, but also towards the actress, Kordelchen, who eventually goes mad for love of him, like the country girl abandoned by the Fürst.

After the tragic ending of this theatrical interval, Victor (whose identity is still not revealed to the reader) is seized once again with the urge to write, but this apparently innocent pastime also ends in horror:

"Als er sich aber so einsam hinsetzte und hastig trank und schrieb, da war's ihm, als riefe es durch die Stille seinen Namen, erst leise, dann lauter, und der Teufel sah ihn beim Schreiben über die Schulter und flüsterte zu ihm: Nur zu, nur zu! die unschuldige Welt mit vornehmen Worten belogen und verführt, ich will dich dafür auf die Zinnen des Ruhms stellen, und der Welt soll dir huldigen! -" (II, 649)

Hereupon Victor forsakes the written word, goes to the
window and sings to the accompaniment of his guitar a song of renunciation containing these lines:

"Wildester der Lügengeist,
Ring mit mir, ich lache dein!" (II, 649)

The expression, "wildester der Lügengeist" recurs in other works: here it may be taken to mean "superbia". Victor has not only become successful as knight and poet: he has become famous, and has imperceptibly begun to crave fame. Earlier in the novel, Fortunat took him aback by saying, "ich glaube, du könntest ein grosser Dichter sein, wenn du nicht so stolz wärrest" (II, 566). And subsequently, the simple but shrewd hermit perceives the same fault in the sportsman who comes to him full of the scorn of the highly cultured for the uneducated:

"Ich sage Euch, Demut ist der Anfang und das Ende, hochmütiger Mensch!" (II, 669)

The little sermon ending in this sentence completes the work begun by the death of Juanna, the hallucination about the "Lügengeist", and the storm of applause received immediately thereafter at the performance of one of his plays, when he is recognized by the audience. Victor has not a word to say in answer to the hermit, but on the following morning the

3That this character is reminiscent of Abraham a Santa Clara is not surprising in view of the opening lines of a sketch for an autobiographical Novelle entitled "Trösteinsamkeit: Aus dem Tagebuch eines Einsiedels":

"VERSCHIEDENE BETRACHTUNGEN (in Prosa) = religiös, dithyrambisch, auch humoristisch à la Abraham a St. Clara!" (II, 994).

Although the treatment is farcical, the underlying impression given by the monk is one of strength and reliability, as with Schiller's somewhat similar figure in Wallensteins Lager.
future Vitalis reveals his true greatness in a speech which affects the hermit as deeply as the hermit's had affected him:

"'Sieh,' sagte er, 'das ist ein Friede Gottes überall, als zogen die Engelscharen singend über die Erde. Die armen Menschenkinder! sie hören's nur, wie im Traume...O, wer ihnen allen den Frieden bringen könnte! Aber wer das ehrlich will, muss erst Frieden stiften in sich selbst, und wenn er darüber zusammenbräche, was tut's! - Sieh, Gesell, und das ist geistliches Recht und Tagewerk!'" (II, 670)

Victor's arrogance has been overcome and he is now ready to enter his real vocation of priesthood.

Once again, as with Friedrich in "Ahnung und Gegenwart", the knight and poet have given way to the priest, but in the later novel to a priest of far greater ability than in the former. Friedrich's character is indeterminate: he serves mainly as a mouthpiece for Eichendorff's opinions. He falls into no sin, except for his contemptible behaviour towards Rosa; neither does he achieve greatness. His only positive characteristic is his faith. He and Victor have a common ideal in their wish to remain as missionaries in Europe, though their manner of saying so is characteristically different, Friedrich's being verbose, idealistic, and vague, whereas Victor's is direct and almost crude. Friedrich says, inter alia:

"'...Mir scheint in diesem Elend, wie immer, keine andere Hülfe, als die Religion...Wenn das Geschlecht vor der Hand einmal alle seine irdischen Sorgen, Mühen und fruchtwlosen Versuche, der Zeit wieder auf die Beine zu helfen, vergessen und wie ein Kleid abstreifen, und sich dafür mit voller, siegreicher Gewalt zu Gott wenden wollte, wenn die Gemüter auf solche Weise
von den göttlichen Wahrheiten der Religion lange
vorbereitet, erweitert, gereinigt und wahrhaft
durchdrungen würden, dass der Geist Gottes und
das Grosse im öffentlichen Leben wieder Raum in
ihnen gewonne, dann erst wird es Zeit sein,
unmittelbar zu handeln, und das alte Recht, die
alte Freiheit, Ehre und Ruhm in das wiedereroberte
Reich zurückzuführen. Und in dieser Gesinnung
bleibe ich in Deutschland und wähle mir das Kreuz
zum Schwerte. Denn, wahrlich, wie man sonst
Missionarei unter Kannibalen aussandte, so tut
es jetzt viel mehr not in Europa, dem ausgebildeten
Heidensitze'." (II, 296-297)

"Ahnung und Gegenwart" was written at a time of
defeat and despair, when it seemed that Napoleon could never
be driven from Germany. The novel is permeated with
political as well as religious and literary worries.
"Dichter und ihre Gesellen", written during a period of
greater stability, is very little concerned with politics
or economic matters, though the slightly earlier "Viel
Lärm um nichts" and a number of later Novellen discuss them.
Thus Victor's speech on the reconversion of Europe can be
restricted to moral problems:

"'Nicht morsche Mönche, Quäker und alteiWeiber;
die Morgenfrischen, Kühnen will ich werben, die
recht aus Herzensgrund nach Krieg verlangt [sic].
Auch nicht übers Meer hindüber blick' ich, wo
unschuldige Völker unter Palmen vom künftigen
Morgenrot träumen, mitten auf den alter,
beschäumten, staubigen Markt von Europa will ich
hinuntersteigen, die selbstgemachten Götzten, um
die das Volk der Renegaten tanzt, gelöstes
mich umzustürzen und Luft zu hauen durch den
dicken Qualm, dass sie schauernd das treue Auge
Gottes wiedersehen im tiefen Himmelsgrund'." (II, 726-727)

Both Friedrich and Victor quote "Hamlet" in their
last speeches. Friedrich says:
"Verloren ist, wen die Zeit unvorbereitet und unbewaffnet trifft; und wie mancher, der weich und aufgelegt zu Lust und frühlichem Dichten, sich so gern mit der Welt vertrüge, wird, wie Prinz Hamlet, zu sich selber sagen: 'Weh, dass ich zur Welt, sie einzurichten, kam!'" (II, 302)

But whereas Friedrich, like Hamlet, leaves this remark as a lament, the more positive Victor turns it into a challenge in his last words to his friends:

"'O Freunde, das ist eine Zeit! glücklich, wer drin geboren ward, sie auszufechten!'" (II, 727)

A further similarity between the two is to be found in Eichendorff's description of Friedrich "in blanker Rüstung als Kämpfer Gottes" (II, 284), and in Fortunat's last words to Victor, "Ade, du geistliches Soldatenherz" (II, 727). Both of these phrases bring to mind the knights of the mediaeval religious orders, who were monks or priests as well as soldiers. In his second historical tragedy, "Der letzte Held von Marienburg" (1830), Eichendorff wrote about monk-knights of many different dispositions; although the admission is not made in the play, the reader cannot escape the conclusion that Eichendorff found the combination of soldier and priest untenable, the two being in fact mutually exclusive. Nothing daunted, Eichendorff continued to regard the Christian knight as the ideal, attainable or not.

4The time is out of joint; 0 cursed spite,
That ever I was born to set it right. (Act I, Scene 5)

5This is not the only contradiction maintained throughout his works, another, for example, being the apparent ambiguity of his conception of nature, which is variously described as peril (to the infidel) or panacea (to the faithful).
was simultaneously soldier and priest, though knight and cleric are each expected to share something of the other's virtues: a crusade has need of both. He expresses the root of the trouble in one of his last works, "Geschichte der poetischen Literatur Deutschlands" (1857):

"Und dieser wesentlich tragische Doppelgeist des Rittertums, die gewaltige Naturkraft und die freiwillige Demütigung vor einem Höheren, mit einem Wort: das durch Christentum verklärte Heldentum, ist denn auch der eigentliche Gegenstand der Poesie des Mittelalters, die fortan jeden weltlichen Kampf mehr oder minder zum Kreuzzuge gestaltet." (IV, 43)

However, we may be sure that neither Friedrich nor Victor, on becoming a priest, would be called upon to bear arms, their fighting being of a purely spiritual nature.

Victor's last speech contains one very striking allusion which seems the antithesis of Eichendorff's view of the high position of the knight:

"...der Teufel in funkelndem Ritterschmuck reitet die Reihen entlang und zeigt den Völkern durch den Wolkenriss die Herrlichkeit der Länder und ruft ihnen zu: Seid frei, und alles ist euer!" (II, 727)

This description of the devil is strongly reminiscent of Donati's first appearance in "Das Marmorbild": "ein hoher, schlanker Ritter in reichem Geschmeide" (II, 314), who subsequently is revealed as the devil or one of his emissaries as called up by the baser side of Florio's nature, later happily overcome. It also serves as a reminder of the "schimmernde Abgründe" (II, 648) which proved the undoing of the Fürst. Eichendorff in this imagery has reversed the
mediaeval artistic conception of the forces of evil, which were always pictured as ugly and monstrous. He substitutes for it a logical principle of evil concealed behind a mask of enticing beauty. Thus the most pernicious force can take on the appearance of the best: the devil may look like a splendid knight; the enchantress in "Das Marmorbild" appears on one occasion as the double of Bianka, the enchantress of "Die Zauberei im Herbste" as the double of Berta.

Although Victor remains behind on the mountain top after his companions' departure, and the last word is given to the hermit ("Du schöne Welt, nimm dich in acht!")(II, 728), the supremacy of the priestly calling being thus affirmed, the main character of the novel is Fortunat. His very name, like that of Fortunato in "Das Marmorbild", indicates that he occupies a favoured position, and in a novel entitled "Dichter und ihre Gesellen", this position cannot escape being that of the true poet.

Three poets of the novel have already been discussed: Victor, who achieved worldly success as a poet but gave up literature in favour of priesthood; Otto, who fervently admired Victor's poetry but could not attain greatness; and the Jack of all trades, Dryander, who does not merit serious consideration as a poet. Fiametta, too, has a small claim to attention on this score, though she is more important as muse than as poet. But Fortunat is the genuine poet by profession, who says to Victor:
"Du Victor zumal, verwirrst mir schon seit gestern, wie ein nächtlches Wetterleuchten, der Seele Grund: tiefe Klüfte mit kühnen Stegen darüber und manche alte, geliebte Gegend fernab, aber alles so fremd und wunderbar wie in Träumen. Zuletzt ist's doch dasselbe, was ich eigentlich auch meine in der Welt, ich habe nur kein anderes Metier dafür als meine Dichtkunst, und bei der will ich leben und sterben!" (II, 727)

In this final speech, Fortunat sums up the essence of Eichendorff's views on the poet's mission. It is fundamentally the same as that of the priest: the poet must regard the world without fear or favour, and be guided at all times by religion, but instead of conducting services and administering the sacraments, he must preach the gospel indirectly and subtly by means of his literary skill. This is essentially the same view as that expressed in "Ahnung und Gegenwart", but with a difference: in the early novel the professional poet, Faber, is treated as a comic character, and Leontin, the true poet, pursues literature only as an avocation, while planning to make government service his profession. However, he is not obliged to earn his own living, and in fact his sole profession is poetry. In the later novel, Fortunat is able to devote his time entirely to poetry and the sheer joy of living. As in the case of the Taugenichts, who owned nothing but his violin, and of Willibald in "Viel Lärmum um nichts", who had lost everything but his talent, Fortunat is able to marry and live happily ever after with no tiresome obligation to earn money. The same disregard for the provenance of the next meal is to be found in Siglhupfer, the hero of "Die Glücksritter",

who, though he sings songs, gives his profession as "wandernder Musikus" (II, 895), his instrument being the "Klarinett" whose name he takes as his pseudonym.

Of the twelve poets appearing in Eichendorff's narrative prose, three are also musicians (of course, the others can play a few chords of accompaniment on lute or guitar): Taugenichts, Dryander, and Siglhubfer. It would be possible to add the "Prager Studenten" of "Aus dem Leben eines Taugenichts" (1826) to this list; however, they are not professional musicians, but merely theology students earning their living as wandering minstrels during their holidays. Nevertheless, they serve to hint at the bond Eichendorff wishes to strengthen between religion and the arts, as does the serious painter Guido of "Dichter und ihre Gesellen".

The three poet-musicians, besides being of humble origin, are all irresponsible. The least admirable of the three is Dryander, with his weathercock adaptability to changing winds, shown, for instance, in the "Hofrat" episode at the Fürst's court (II, 593), and his brief enthusiasm for husbandry during his visit to Manfred (II, 663). Nevertheless, in spite of his instability and impishness, there is no evil in him, and he is certainly as little enslaved by Mammon as the more lovable Taugenichts and Siglhubfer. Dryander's first and last appearances in the novel are as a violinist (II, 510 and 728), a fact which suggests that music is his
true vocation and that he should concentrate on it, if such a vacillating personality is capable of perseverance. The reader's last glimpse of him, fiddling down the road ahead of the strolling players, is full of charm.

The two millers' sons, Taugenichts and Siglhupfer, win admiration by their very simplicity and lack of pretentiousness. Siglhupfer seems slightly the less pure of the two, when one considers his vulgar anecdote about his parents (II, 897) and his light-hearted opportunism. But this one can forgive him in view of his essential innocence; he is no more corrupted by his adventures in Graf Gerold's palatial home than Taugenichts is by his journey to Italy as a supposed noblewoman in disguise. Both return to the simple life without a thought for the splendours they are leaving, and this is the more remarkable in Siglhupfer, who does not have a delightful little "Schloss" given him as dowry with his bride, but returns to a precarious life of vagabondage in order to be reunited with his true love, Denkeli. It is significant that Siglhupfer "blieb fortan in den Wäldern selig verschollen" (II, 933), the woods being Eichendorff's favourite symbol of the proximity to nature which he considers indispensable to a balanced life. Siglhupfer is the last artist (in the general sense) to appear in Eichendorff's works, and his chosen lot in life confirms the idea, elsewhere advanced, that the artist should not look for worldly advancement, but leave himself in the hands of God. As Taugenichts says more than once, with slight
variations:

"Den lieben Gott lass ich nur walten;
Der Bächlein, Lerchen, Wald und Feld
Und Erd' und Himmel will erhalten,
Hat auch mein' Sach' auf's best' bestellt!" (II, 350)

Of the nine remaining poets, who are not also accomplished musicians, seven are knights. The two who are not, Faber and Otto, are not in great favour with their author. Faber is treated mainly as a clown, a foil to the more talented Friedrich and Leontin, though Eichendorff redeems him to some extent in the last chapter and allows him to continue his life as a poet by profession, though inferior to his friends. The unexplained change in his views is just another inconsistency in the development of "Ahnung und Gegenwart", one of those flaws which conceal from the casual reader the true depth of the philosophy underlying the novel. But Faber's last speech about his profession merits serious consideration:

"...Denn das Haschen der Poesie nach aussen, das geistige Verarbeiten und Bekümmerum um das, was eben vorgeht, das Ringen und Abarbeiten an der Zeit, so gross und lobenswert als Gesinnung, ist doch immer unkünstlerisch. Die Poesie mag wohl Wurzel schlagen in demselben Boden der Religion und Nationalität, aber unbekümmt, bloss um ihrer himmlischen Schönheit willen, als Wunderblume zu uns heraufwachsen. Sie will und soll zu nichts brauchbar sein. Aber das versteht ihr [Friedrich und Leontin] nicht und macht mich nur irre. Ein fröhlicher Künstler mag sich vor euch hüten. Denn wer die Gegenwart aufgibt, wie Friedrich, wem die frische Lust am Leben und seinem überschwenglichen Reichtume gebrochen ist, mit dessen Poesie ist es aus. Er ist wie ein Maler ohne Farben.'" (II, 297)

That tendentious literature is usually lacking in artistry
is a truism. That Eichendorff recommends art for art's sake could be misconstrued by a later generation, but for his qualifying his statement by noting that poetry is rooted in the same soil as religion and nationality (not "Vaterländerei";). But the idea in this paragraph which is perhaps most typical of Eichendorff is the indispensability for the artist of "die frische Lust am Leben und seinem Überschwenglichen Reichtume". It is this joy of living which characterizes the true artists in Eichendorff, and perhaps explains their freedom from responsibility. For not only those who are by nature irresponsible are provided for by unexplained means: also those who are acutely aware of the responsibility of the poet are relieved from any necessity to earn their bread: Leontin, though his lands are confiscated, has no financial worries in regard to his tour of the New World; Fortunato, Florio, and Fortunat have lavish incomes from unspecified sources; the reader makes the acquaintance of the "Amtmann" who administers Victor's estates and keeps him well provided for, and indirectly Otto, whom Victor anonymously supports.

This exemption from the need to earn was enjoyed by Eichendorff only in his early youth, before his father's fortune began to dwindle. When he was grown up, he suffered from real poverty for some time, and was never wealthy in his own right, though from middle age onward he had an adequate income. As the early period of prosperity coincided with his studies at school and university and in preparation for first the Austrian and then the Prussian civil service
examinations, his only extended leisure was after his retirement in 1844. From then on his only literary creations were the Märchen, "Libertas und ihre Freier" (1849), the three verse epics, "Julian" (1852), "Robert und Guiscard" (1855), and "Lucius" (1857), and a few short poems of which only the last mentioned are important (He also wrote many critical and historical works and translations from the Spanish during his retirement.). Leisure, therefore, can be discounted as a prerequisite for Eichendorff's own literary composition; but it is no wonder that, forced himself to support his wife and children by uncongenial work, he should provide the poets of his novels and Novellen with an ideal life in which they could devote themselves to their art, though, indeed, his last artist, Siglupfer, author of the remarkable aphorism, "niehts langweiliger als Glück (II, 920), chooses a hard life in preference to luxury.

Otto, like Dryander a non-knightly poet, is dismissed as negligible. Nevertheless, despite his creative insufficiency, he has the artist's perception, and is blessed with visions, one of which may explain, in part, Eichendorff's predilection for sending his poets off to Italy, apart from the general attraction of the southern clime for northerners:


The bells, of course, are church bells, and the "other Rome"
beyond the hills is the Kingdom of Heaven. Rome is not merely the chief city of Italy, the land of dreams of German classicists and romanticists alike, but also the centre and symbol of the Roman Catholic Church of which Eichendorff and all his poets are devout adherents. Thus the nostalgia of his artists for Italy is not merely a longing for a subtropical climate and for the opportunity to view a wealth of art treasures, as was the case with many of his contemporaries, but also an expression of the pilgrimage towards heaven which is a recurrent theme throughout his works.

Eichendorff, however, equates Italy, not only with an earthly reminder of heaven, but also with the land of temptation to such an extent that Ricarda Huch, in one of her pithy, unforgettable phrases, says, in regard to "Das Marmorbild": "Ganz Italien ist der Hörselberg; den Verlockten rettet die Kirche oder denn - Deutschland." (op. cit., p. 38). It is noteworthy that the only poet to fall by the wayside in Italy is Otto, the unsuccessful, who is miraculously saved after his return to Germany. Florio is the only other poet to be severely tempted in Italy; in his case, the church, or more accurately his own devoutness, saves him.

The choice of the poet who is also a knight seems to be not quite as stated by Ricarda Huch, but rather between the two aspects of Rome: the church or Italy. For of the

6This topic is discussed in, for example, Reinhold Schneider's "Prophetische Pilgerschaft", to be found in Eichendorff heute, ed. Paul Stocklein (München 1960).
seven knightly poets, Friedrich and Victor become priests, Fortunato and Florio are Italians resident in Italy, and the remaining three, Leontin, Willibald and Fortunat, all marry and go abroad, Leontin to America, but the other two to Italy (The volatile Taugenichts, too, after denouncing "false Italy", suggests to his beloved that they should go there on their honeymoon!). It is noteworthy that only Leontin, the earliest of Eichendorff's true poets, does not go to Italy: this exception may be due to the political circumstances under which Eichendorff wrote "Ahnung und Gegenwart", even Italy being under Napoleon's domination at that time; in all his post-Napoleonic writings, Italy seems the spiritual home of the true poet.

In regard to the bond which Eichendorff postulates between poetry and knighthood, it is to be remarked that all Eichendorff's true poets are knights, although the converse does not hold. There are five of these poets: Leontin, Fortunato, Florio, Willibald and Fortunat. With them are associated two other knights who give up poetry for the priesthood: Friedrich and Victor. Thus there is a powerful association in Eichendorff's mind between the knight, the poet, and the priest. There seems little doubt that Eichendorff had the highest respect for those characters in whom all three callings are successively combined: Friedrich and Victor. Nevertheless, his heart equally obviously lies with those whose choice is his own, especially with Willibald and Fortunat, the products of his maturity.
VI. Little Novellen

Little has been said hitherto about "Viel Lärmum nichts" (1850), as it scarcely touches on the subject of knighthood. However, its hero, Willibald, is a knight, and the short story of his life, often quoted by critics, is worth a repetition:

"Der Sturm der Zeit, der so viele Sterne verlöscht und neue entzündet, hatte auch den Stammbaum seines alten, berühmten Geschlechts zerzaust: seine Eltern starben an gebrochem Stolz, ihre Güter und seine Heimat waren längst an andre Besitzer gekommen, die er nicht einmal dem Namen nach kannte. Aber Unglück gibt einen tiefen Klang in einem tückigen Geräusch und hatte auch ihn frühzeitig durch den tragischen Ernst des Lebens der Poesie zugewendet. Mit freudigem Schauer fühlte er sich bald einer andern, wunderbaren Adelskette angehört, über welche die Zeit keine Gewalt hat, und rasch Konnexionen, Brotperspektiven und allen Plunder, der das Gemeine bändigt, von sich abschüttelnd, zog er nun eben arm, aber frei und vergnügt, in die Welt wie in sein weites, fröhliches Reich hinaus. Nur seine schöne Heimat, die am Ausgang dieses Gebirges lag, und an der seine Seele mit aller Macht jugendlicher Erinnerung hing, wollte er noch einmal wiedersehen und dann sich nach Italien wenden." (II, 470)

This passage more than any other sums up the mature Eichendorff's views on life, though with characteristic concealment behind imagery which does not at first, or even second, glance reveal the philosophy behind it. For instance, although Eichendorff founded his whole life on religion, there is no specific mention of it in this paragraph, but whoever has read much of this author, picks up the religious overtones inherent in his use of the words
"Heimat", "Schauer", "Italien".

The heart of the passage is in the third sentence of the quotation: ("Mit freudigem Schauer", etc.), where Willibald gives up the temporal for the eternal, the earthly for the heavenly, security for a life of wandering; by this renunciation he is certainly impoverished financially, but infinitely enriched spiritually: he is leaving his "Heimat", but in return the whole world becomes his "fröhliches Reich". He makes the same decision as the Apostles, as the priests, as Taugenichts and Siglhuber: he puts himself into the hands of God. He even forgets his noble descent, feeling himself to be allied rather with those who are noble in character (and particularly with poets, as the "Adelskette" results from his dedication to "Poesie") than with those who are noble by birth. And by his loss he gains. The contradictions inherent in Eichendorff's works are shown in this passage to be concealed strength rather than weakness: "mit freudigem Schauer", for instance, is a bold paradox of a type recurrent in Eichendorff's works (the line "Fromm zerbrechend alle Bande" from "Nachtfeier" (I, 127), written in 1810, is a case in point, and "Romana's "Von dem Glanze selig blind" (II, 125) another). But more important is the contrast between the "Unglück" and "tragischen Ernst des Lebens" of one sentence, and the "frei und vergnügt" and "sein weites, fröhliches Reich" of the next. Eichendorff's philosophy is capable of a Hegelian reconciliation of opposites: Willibald experiences tragedy and turns it to
joy by a process not explicitly stated in this paragraph but implicit in all of Eichendorff's works, namely, by belief in Christ. Willibald renounces everything which restricts "das Gemeine", or, as Taugenichts expressed it, "die Trägen, die zu Hause liegen" (II, 350). In return, he receives something far above the common lot even of poets - Aurora as his bride. Since "Aurora", with its Bohemian connotation of the soul's awareness of God, means variously in Eichendorff's works the Romantic muse, poetry, dawn, or resurrection, Willibald outshines Solomon in all his glory.

Willibald also serves as the common denominator of all the poets in Eichendorff's narratives, for, though he belongs to the knightly class, he renounces the privileges and, even more difficult, the customs of his class, to set off with no provision for the future, like Siglhupfer, his only objective being the pursuit of poetry (not, in the beginning, the Gräfin Aurora, whom he meets in the course of his adventures). Thus he is at once knight and vagabond, poet and pilgrim. By going to Italy, like most of his confrères, he wanders in search of greener fields; this emigration is Eichendorff's symbolic escape from constraint, from all those aspects of life in Prussia which distressed him during his long stay in the north, where he never felt at home.

With Willibald the roster of poets is complete. It is apparent that Eichendorff prefers the poet who is also a knight, as was usually the case in the Middle High German
period which he greatly admires. However, Willibald's "Adelskette" opens the ranks to those who are pure in heart, who single-mindedly follow the poet's calling, setting up the heavenly ladders for the benefit of the less perceptive, as he says in his discussion of Arnim in "Geschichte der poetischen Literatur Deutschlands":

"Kein Dichter gibt einen fertigen Himmel; er stellt nur die Himmelsleiter auf von der schönen Erde. Wer zu träge und unlustig, nicht den Mut verspürt, die losen, goldenen Sprossen zu besteigen, dem bleibt der geheimnisvolle Buchstabe doch ewig tot, und ein Leser, der nicht selber mit und über dem Buche nachzudichten vermag, täte besser, an ein ländliches Handwerk zu gehen, als so mit müßigem Lesen seine Zeit zu verderben." (IV, 290)

Willibald bears a particularly close resemblance to the knightly poet Portunat, but misfortune successfully overcome has transfigured him. He has a charm as unforgettable as that of the Taugenichts, with none of the latter's irresponsibility or childishness. Eichendorff's last poet-knight is also his best.

Figures of knights appear in most of the Novellen Eichendorff wrote after "Dichter und ihre Gesellen". However, this second novel presents in definitive form his views on the knight proper, which the later Novellen do not expand. They do, nevertheless, acknowledge the possibility of chivalrous behaviour by men of undistinguished birth and even by women of all ranks. The ultimate breadth of the

1This passage is a reworking of one in "Ahnung und Gegenwart" (II, 99), one of numerous unacknowledged quotations from his own works.
author's views on this matter is expressed in the figure of Marie in "Robert und Guiscard" (1855), which, being a verse epic, is technically outside the scope of this study. Marie rescues from a band of French revolutionaries the aristocratic family that her father serves as gardener, accompanies it on its flight to Heidelberg, and marries the elder son. Eichendorff in his youth would have considered this marriage a misalliance, but he makes his way to this idea by slow stages which can be observed throughout his later Novellen such as "Das Schloss Dürande" (1837) and "Eine Meerfahrt" (not published until 1864). In his penultimate literary work, "Robert und Guiscard", Eichendorff overcame all social prejudice against those who are noble in spirit but not by birth, a viewpoint which is expressed in a different connotation in his essay "Halle und Heidelberg" (1857):

"Unsere Universitäten sind endlich bisher eine Art von Republik, die einzigen noch übriggebliebenen Trümmer deutscher Einheit, ein brüderlicher Verein ohne Rücksicht auf die Unterschiede der Provinz, des Ranges oder Reichtums, wo den Niedriggebornen die Überlegenheit des Geistes und Charakters zum Senior über Fürsten und Grafen erhob." (IV, 1076)

Since this second part of "Erlebtes" is based on his own experiences as a student, the thought of spiritual equality in society (as well as in religion) may have been on his mind from his early youth, but it was not until fifty years after his enrollment at Halle that it found expression in his literary works as an actual marriage between a knight and a girl of humbler birth.

Apart from this development in regard to men of
lowly birth and to women, the later Novellen, except "Die Glücksritter" which has been mentioned above, are of little importance with respect to knighthood, "Dichter und ihre Gesellen" representing Eichendorff's mature opinion on this subject.
VII. Conclusion

The knight occurs as an image throughout the entire period of Eichendorff's creative work, a matter of fifty years. This persistence in itself indicates that the figure of the knight is one of great importance to the author. In the course of time his attention shifts from mediaeval knighthood to a passive confrontation with Napoleon, and finally to an active encounter with nineteenth century society in Germany.

In Eichendorff's earliest prose narrative, he presents the knight in an elemental struggle with evil. Of the two knights in "Die Zauberei im Herbst", Ubaldo fulfills the duties of the mediaeval knight, first as a crusader and later in leading an exemplary Christian life, whereas Raimund, through lack of faith, falls victim to the daemonic.

During the few years which passed between the composition of this Märchen and the novel, "Ahnung und Gegenwart", Eichendorff abandoned the outward forms of mediaeval knighthood except in those works which are set in the Middle Ages. These forms are dismissed as affectations in contemporary life and literature. Nevertheless, Eichendorff explicitly clings to the ideals for which the mediaeval knight stood, the climax of the novel being the account of Friedrich's decision to enter the priesthood:
"Er hatte endlich den phantastischen, tausendfarbigen Pilgermantel abgeworfen, und stand nun in blanker Rüstung als Kämpfer Gottes gleichsam an der Grenze zweier Welten."

(II, 284)

Both the pilgrim's cloak and the shining armour are, of course, purely symbolic, as are the two worlds on whose border he stands. The cloak represents what Friedrich earlier called his "Irrfahrt" (II, 210) through the manifold experiences of ordinary life in the everyday world; the armour stands for the purity and detachment of the clerical life whose world he is about to enter. These two worlds exist together, but the latter is more directly oriented to the life to come than is the former, and therefore commands Eichendorff's highest respect.

The world to come is always uppermost in Eichendorff's thought; religion is his mainspring and his constant concern. The priest's occupation absorbs him in religion, and this absorption places him at the summit of human achievement. But closely allied to him in the preaching and protection of religion are the poet (and other artists) and the knight. Throughout Eichendorff's prose works members of all three callings are found in close association. The intimate connection between art and religion characterises the thought of all Romantics and finds its definitive expression in Schleiermacher's "Reden über die Religion". Eichendorff adds a third calling to these central human concerns, that of the knight. In "Ahnung und Gegenwart", Friedrich, Rudolf and Leontin are
knights, Rudolf being in addition a painter and the other two poets, of whom one forsakes poetry for priesthood.
Their friend, Faber, is a poet but not a knight.

Eichendorff evidently did not regard the priesthood as a suitable topic for literary discussion: Friedrich in this novel and Victor in "Dichter und ihre Gesellen" disappear from the story before their ordination. Apparently the author believed that priests should be regarded as spiritual representatives of God, on too high a plane to be considered as mere characters in a novel or Novelle. The sole exception in his narrative prose is the hermit in the later novel, a rather crude and comical character, who is depicted on a decidedly lower plan intellectually than Victor and the other knights and poets, but who, nominally, at least, is spiritually superior to all in view of the fact that he has been ordained.

Ubaldo in "Die Zauberei im Herbst" was a crusader; Friedrich in "Ahnung und Gegenwart" appears as a "Kämpfer Gottes". These two characters from Eichendorff's earliest prose narratives draw attention to the knight who defends the faith by force of arms as well as by the preaching and practice of Christian principles. In his historical tragedy, "Der letzte Held von Marienburg" (1830, Eichendorff examined in detail the moral dilemma involved in fulfilling simultaneously the duties of the monk and those of the soldier, and discovered that it was impossible. The
conflict between the Grand Master, Plauen, and the Council of the Teutonic Knights, concerns the matter of whether the Order should save itself through war or peace. Both sides are right: on the one hand, the Order could not maintain its dominance in Prussia after 1410 without war, but, on the other, war to uphold mere temporal power, after the missionary purpose of the Order has been fulfilled, is contrary to the spirit of Christianity. Plauen's efforts to avert the doom he foresaw for the Order bring about his own downfall. He is a victim of the "wesentlich tragischer Doppelgeist des Rittertums" (IV, 43) on which Eichendorff commented in his literary history. It is impossible to be monk and soldier at once. Perhaps this awareness contributed to Eichendorff's reluctance to write about priests in his narrative prose, with the exception noted above, and instead to delegate part of the priest's duties to knights and poets. In this delegation he was undoubtedly influenced by the general Romantic attitude illustrated by Novalis' ideas on the purpose of the poet, which Eichendorff describes thus in his "Geschichte der poetischen Literatur Deutschlands":

"Die Poesie war ihm ein Gottesdienst, der Dichter ein Priester, die Inspiration des gläubig Schauenden und echte dichterische Begeisterung ein und dasselbe." (IV, 254)

The link which Eichendorff perceives between poet and knight appears in his studies of mediaeval literature:

"Und so fiel sie [die Poesie] denn auch sehr bald den Rittern anheim, als dem Stande, der das äussere Leben am entschiedensten bestimmte und führte." (IV, 64)
"Dieser Minnesanges aber war eben nur der Widerklang und poetische Ausdruck des damaligen Lebens, seinen Gegenstand bildeten fast ausschliesslich dieselben geistigen Elemente, die auch das Rittertum in seiner schönsten Blüte umfasste: Gottesdienst, unverbrüchliche Treue im Herren- und Frauendienst, und endlich dieser Frauendienst selbst." (IV, 66)

"Der Adel teilte noch immer das tiefe Naturgefühl des Volks, und stand im Wissen nur wenig über... Daher sind diese ritterlichen Minnelieder noch ganz frei von aller gelehrten Prätension und Pedanterie, und wurden...stets, wie das Volkslied, gesungen." (IV, 67)

It is doubtful whether Eichendorff's opinion of a deep feeling for nature being expressed in Minnesang can be justified. However, one must accept that he found in mediaeval literature the basis for the close affinity he felt to exist between poet and knight, and that he believed that both were imbued with strong faith and loyalty, along with love of nature, and that poetry is intimately allied with music.

This close bond between poet and knight, between religion, poetry and music, is expressed clearly in "Das Marmorbild", whose chief figures, Florio and Fortunato, are both knights and poets. The latter is first named as "der Sänger Fortunato" (II, 309), a term which emphasizes Eichendorff's view of poetry and music as almost inseparable (An instrumentalist might take an opposite stand, regarding words as an interruption and distraction. Nevertheless, beautiful poetry is always a pleasure to the ear and is in itself musical.). The bond with religion is manifested in Fortunato's two ballads, "Was klingt mir so heiter" (II,
311-313) and "Von kühnen Wunderbildern" (II, 342-343), and the last song of the Novelle, Florio's "Hier bin ich, Herr; Gegrüsst das Licht!" (II, 345).

The close alliance of poet, priest, and knight is found not only in the prose narratives, but also in works of other types throughout Eichendorff's life, as in the following stanza from "An die Freunde" (1815), which equates preaching with literature and military life:

"Nennt mir die Palme eures hohen Strebens! Bequeme Rast ist nicht des Lebens wert, Nach Ruh' sehnt sich die Menschenbrust vergebens, Er kämpft will sein, was hoher Sinn begehrt. Ein Krieger bleibt der grössere Mann zeitlebens, Er kämpft mit Rede, Büchern oder Schwert, Und rechter Friede wird nur da geschlossen, Wo jedem Streiter seine Palmen sprossen." (I, 151)

Gorgia, arguing in favour of Christian charity against Ezelin's policy of power, in "Ezelin von Romano", affirms the identity of knighthood and religion:

"Herr, ist das Schwert Doch selbst ein Kreuz!" (I, 767)

Eichendorff's conviction of the tie between poetry and religion is strongly expressed in his "Geschichte der poetischen Literatur Deutschlands" (1846):

"Gerade der frische Blick in die Welt und die tiefere Ahnung ihrer verhüllten geistigen Physiognomie bezeichnet den Dichter, dessen Sache es ist, nicht, wie der Vogel Strauss beim Anblick des Jägers, von dem bunten Wirrsal feig den Kopf zu verstecken, sondern die sinnliche Erscheinung im Feuer himmlischer Schönheit zu taufen und vom Gemeinen zu erlösen. Nur in der wohlerstandenen innigen Eintracht von Poesie und Religion also ist für beide Heil; denn die wahre Poesie ist durchaus religiös, und die Religion poetisch, und eben diese geheimnisvolle Doppelnatur beider darzustellen, war die grosse
Aufgabe der Romantik." (IV, 400-401)

Thus Eichendorff, late in his long literary career, reaffirmed his conviction of the kinship of poetry and religion which was already stated in the poem of 1815, where it is enlarged to include knighthood. These three things remained united at the heart of Eichendorff's philosophy from first to last.

Fortunato symbolizes the steadfast positive side of knighthood, from which Florio wavers but to which he returns unscathed: Donati the negative, oriented not to God, but towards the world, the flesh and the devil. Florio's decisive rejection of the daemonic, after a period of dazzled attraction, is typical of Eichendorff's treatment of the young man whose character is in the beginning unformed but with a decided bias in favour of the positive. Florio's religious faith is never in doubt; it is merely the sensual side of his nature which for a time imperils his soul, but which is eventually brought under control by his faith. In "Die Zauberei im Herbste", Ubaldo likewise represents man whose faith prevents him from succumbing to sensual temptation, while Raimund is unable to resist. Thus we see that the knight is not necessarily an example of God's order on earth, but may be a typical human being, a seeker after truth, who must combat evil and possibly succumb to it, or may even be the personification of evil itself.
In "Dichter und ihre Gesellen", Victor dedicates himself to the priesthood. The supremacy of this vocation is symbolized by Victor's remaining on the mountain after his friends have descended; the hermit, already ordained, holds for the time being a more honoured position than Victor, in spite of the latter's intellectual (and social) superiority. The second highest vocation is that of the poet, Fortunat, the lucky one. Though his position is regarded as inferior to that of the priest, it is he who has the fullest experience of life and whose words will be heard most widely. The fact that he is nearly the equal of the priest and shares his calling as a preacher is symbolized by his feeling quite at home on the heights. Manfred, on the other hand, though a worthy man, is uneasy on the mountain and breathes freely only when he returns to the mundane concerns of the valley. The Romantic exaltation of priesthood or poetry is not for him. His is the lowest of the three suitable professions for knights: he is about to enter into government service, having already proved his responsibility and administrative ability by restoring the prosperity of the lands which had been in poor heart on his succession to them, and in his concern for his young relative, Fiametta. Eichendorff does not consider Manfred's choice contemptible, merely less desirable than the other two. Someone must look after the lesser folk if the priest and poet are to be relieved of worldly responsibility, and it is Manfred who takes up this burden. He is the indispensable counterpart of Fortunat in
regard to practical responsibility. Primarily he performs the social duties required of the knight, without being able or anxious to claim the superior attainments of Victor and Fortunat.

It is interesting to note that in "Ahnung und Gegenwart", written during the Napoleonic domination of Germany, all the important knights retired from the world: Friedrich to a cloister, Leontin to America, Rudolf first to his "Narrenburg", then to Egypt. There seems to be no place for them in contemporary German society. Friedrich, the only one to remain in Germany, has no expectation of participating in the life of the country: he believes it will be impossible to take effective action until everyone has turned wholeheartedly to God, and that prayer is his only means of helping his people while awaiting that improbable state of affairs.

"In "Dichter und ihre Gesellen", on the other hand, written twenty years after the first novel, the knights all remain active, especially Manfred. Fortunat intends to live in Italy, but his poetry will still be German, and one cannot imagine this elder brother of the Taugenichts never travelling back to Germany. In any case, he will be taking part in as normal a life as is possible for Eichendorff's poets. Victor will perforce withdraw from the world for the period of his clerical training, but intends thereafter to return to the dusty market-place to preach to the European heathen. The return of comparative stability to German affairs made
possible a far more energetic and positive approach to society than was the case in 1812.

In "Dichter und ihre Gesellen" Eichendorff has finally formulated his ideas on knighthood as it could be practised in the nineteenth century. His only advance beyond this philosophical standpoint is in regard to the extension of the category "chivalrous" to include socially inferior men and heroic women, who, in his later works, command his increasing admiration. Woman becomes, in fact, emancipated, the free equal of man, though it is doubtful whether Eichendorff recognized just what a revolution she had successfully brought about in his works: the idea is implicit, not explicit.

This manifestation of nobility of spirit amongst people born below noble rank reveals an ambiguity in Eichendorff's thought. While he consistently upheld the value of tradition, to the point of being frequently accused of reactionary ideas, and opposed emancipation and all its works (for instance, in "Auch ich war in Arkadien" (1837), he nevertheless was receptive to new thoughts which might be for the general good. As Fortunat says:

"Das rechte Alte ist ewig neu, und das rechte Neue schafft sich doch Bahn über alle Berge." (II, 508)

The idea of the combination of new and old elements in a healthy society is expressed more formally in "Der Adel und die Revolution", which was written in and after 1839 and is
thus contemporaneous with the Novellen containing heroic women:

"Aber nur die völlige Barbarei kann ohne Adel bestehen. In jedem Stadium der Zivilisation wird es, gleichviel unter welchen Namen und Formen, immer wieder Aristokraten geben, das heisst eine bevorzugte Klasse, die sich über die Massen erhebt, um sie zu lenken. Denn der Adel (um ihn bei dem einmal traditionnel gewordenen Namen zu nennen) ist seiner unvergänglichen Natur nach das ideale Element der Gesellschaft; er hat die Aufgabe, alles Große, Edle und Schöne, wie und wo es auch im Volke auftauchen mag, ritterlich zu wahren, das ewig wandelbare Neue mit dem ewig Bestehenden zu vermitteln und somit erst wirklich lebensfähig zu machen. Mit romantischen Illusionen und dem blossen eigensinnigen Festhalten des Längstverjährten ist also hierbei gar nichts getan."

(II, 1043)

The earnestness of this support of new ideas and new sources of ideas belies the accusation of extreme conservatism which attaches to Eichendorff. It also makes one wonder just what he was ridiculing in a passage from the unfinished auto-biographical Novelle, "Unstern", somewhat reminiscent of the "Adelskette" of "Viel Lärmen um nichts" (II, 470):

"Ich habe es immer gesagt, nichts als Narrenposen mit dieser Gleichheit. Das soll naturgemäß sein! Als wäre die Natur nicht grade erst aristokratisch, stellt den Ochsen über das Kalb, den Hund über die Katze, die Katze über die Ratte, und unter den Menschen den hohen Geburtsadel des Genies über das andre gemeine Pack."

(II, 1007)

Is he parodying the egalitarians or their opponents, or both? And is he praising the "aristocracy of genius" for its superiority or criticising it for conceit? He certainly did not consider himself above criticism, self-parody, whether of himself or his works, being a fairly common occurrence, one of the most amusing being in the ninth
scene of "Meierbeths Glück und Ende" (1827), where the Muse, surrounded by "Literatoren", complains, "Ich hab' es satt, mich an der Natur zu ergötzen" (I, 643).

But whatever Eichendorff's doubts on equality may have been, he certainly believed in recognizing true worth wherever it might appear, and is hence at least partly in sympathy with the democratic party, as the following words of Robert, the revolutionary brother in "Robert und Guiscard", show:

"Vergbens fabelt ihr von Frauen und Schreibern,
Nein, mit Gedanken heisst's zum Kampfe gehn,
Die immerdarn aus der Erschlagen Leibern,
Ein unsichtbarer Heerbahn, neu erstehn,
Von Menschenadel geht durchs Volk ein Ahnen,
Der älter ist als unsre ältesten Ahnen ...

Wollt ihr die ersten sein, zeigt euch als solche,
So haben eure Ahnen einst getan,
Erwürgt der alten Nacht geschwollne Molche,
Brecht selbst den Morgen an und löst den Bann,
Wie's Rittern zukommt, der gefangnen Dame,
Die Zukunft ist ihr Reich, Freiheit ihr Name."
(I, 456-457)

"Menschenadel" and "Ritter" - yet again the association of human nobility with knights, of nobility of the spirit with nobility of birth. It is the duty of hereditary knights to have, and to cherish wherever it springs anew, nobility of spirit, though from his earliest prose work, "Die Zauberei im Herbst", Eichendorff acknowledged that the knight is not necessarily noble in character. The idea of the responsibility of the knight for earthly justice and his dedication through religion are expressed finally in Eichendorff's literary last will and
testament, "Die heilige Hedwig", a fragment of the
introduction to a biography of Silesia's patron saint,
begun shortly before his death in 1857, in the following
passages:

"Diesen höheren weltgeschichtlichen Kreisen gehörten
z.B.: die geistlichen Ritterorden u. die Klöster
an, deren Regel gleichmäßig durch alle Nationen
ging. Ihnen gehören insbesondere auch Charaktere,
wie die der Heiligen, an. In dieser Region der
Weltgeschichte gibt es keinen Unterschied der
Nationen, der Stände und des Geschlechts; Milde
und Kraft vereinigen sich zu einer höheren
Harmonie aller Seelenkräfte." (IV, 1074)

"In weiterer Gliederung nach unten gruppierte sich
um den Kaiser das Rittertum, in seinem innersten
Wesen gleichfalls ein kirchlich religiöser Verein,
um auch in untergeordneten Kreisen die Gerechtigkeit
etc. Gottes auf Erden darzustellen: Schutz der
Witwen und Waisen, Verehrung der Frauen als eines
Abglanzes der heiligen Maria, der Mariendienst
etc. etc." (IV, 1075)

These two passages contribute the last expression of
Eichendorff's ideal: no distinction of nation, rank or sex,
and the knight as representative of divine justice on earth.

This exalted concept of the knight was Eichendorff's
ideal throughout his life, and as he matured, the concept
widened to embrace both men and women of less than knightly
birth who, in spite of this handicap, attain to loftiness of
spirit. This idea is expressed in "Ahnung und Gegenwart",
where Friedrich speaks of poetry's "angeborene Ritter, die
Dichter" (II, 32), Eichendorff's first linking of the two
professions in his prose works, an early suggestion of
Willibald's "Adelskette" of poetry (II, 470). Friedrich
also links knighthood with religion in saying, "ich ...
A third link in Eichendorff's trinity of poet, priest, and knight is to be found in the following stanzas of Friedrich's farewell to poetry, known in collections as "An die Dichter":

"Der Dichter kann nicht mit verarmen;  
Wenn alles um ihn her zerfällt,  
Hebt ihn ein göttliches Erbarmen —  
Der Dichter ist das Herz der Welt.

Den bläden Willen aller Wesen,  
Im Irdischen des Herren Spur,  
Soll er durch Liebeskraft erlösen,  
Der schöne Liebling der Natur.

Drum hat ihm Gott das Wort gegeben,  
Das kühn das Dunkelste benennt,  
Den frommen Ernst im reichen Leben,  
Die Freudigkeit, die keiner kennt.

Da soll er singen frei auf Erden,  
In Lust und Not auf Gott vertraun,  
Dass aller Herzen freier werden,  
Eratmend in die Klänge schauen." (II, 298-299)

Both poet and knight share the priestly duty of fostering religion and carrying out its ethics beyond the portals of the church. The knight need not be a poet nor the poet a knight, but in general the two callings are combined, while Friedrich and Victor give up both vocations for that of priesthood.

Knightood or, to use a more elastic term, chivalry can be expanded to embrace women of any rank and men of lesser rank whose characters show the ideal traits of religious fervour, purity, loyalty and readiness to sacrifice themselves for others. These characteristics were prized by Eichendorff all his life, with a broadening
appreciation of their incidence as he grew older. Thus the knight, in his spiritual though not his temporal manifestations, may be considered the embodiment of Eichendorff's ideal of humanity throughout his works.
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