

INTRODUCTION.

JOSEPH FREIHERR VON EICHENDORFF, a descendant of an old noble family, was born at the castle of Lubowitz in the Prussian province of Silesia on the 10th of March, 1789. After previous training at home by private tutors he went through the full course at the Catholic Gymnasium in Breslau, and in 1805 became a student of law at the University of Halle, finishing his academic studies in Heidelberg in 1809. As the condition of public affairs in Prussia was then very unsettled, he resolved not to start at once on his professional career, but to spend a few years travelling in Europe.

While, after some years of wandering, Eichendorff was preparing to enter the Austrian government-service in Vienna, the condition of affairs in Prussia came to a final crisis. Napoleon's first disaster on the Russian ice-fields had enflamed all the repressed rage of the down-trodden people, and when now in the beginning of the year 1813 the king of Prussia, Frederick William III., issued that famous appeal *An mein Volk, To my People*, from his exile in Breslau — for Berlin was in the hands of the French — Eichendorff, too, followed the appeal of his sovereign and hastened to headquarters to become a volunteer and soon an officer in that well-known "Lützow Corps" made immortal through Körner's poem. He served throughout the victorious wars of 1813-14 and 1815, but left the military service in 1816, as his whole nature was averse to it.

The share which Eichendorff took in these great events, had strengthened again the ties which bound him to his native