until the close of the 14th century; and the rupture of that concord in the 15th century was largely responsible for its fall.

This political and material strength enabled the Order to weather the storm by which the Templars were destroyed at the beginning of the 14th century. For a time, indeed, the Order lay under papal sentence of excommunication; but the transference of his seat to Marienburg at this time (1308) gave the grand master a basis from which he was able to make easy terms with the pope. Nor was the Order, during the 14th century, at all unfaithful to its original calling. Particularly under the grand master Winrich of Kniprode (1351-1382) it was the school of northern chivalry, engaged in unceasing struggle to defend and extend Christianity against the heathen Lithuanian. To the brilliant court of Marienburg, not only a school of chivalry, but under Winrich’s predecessor Luther of Brunswick, a literary centre,@@1 men came from all over Europe to win their spurs. John of Bohemia had fought by the Vistula: Henry of Bolingbroke was of the goodly company; Chaucer’s perfect knight had travelled in “ Pruce and Lettowe.” The neo-chivalry of the 14th century, in which a fantastic love of adventure had displaced the finer and more ideal motives of the old chivalry, looked towards the Vistula and Marienburg.

At the height of its glory sudden and irretrievable ruin fell upon the Order. The conditions which had made possible its prosperity now disappeared. Externally,· a Slavonic reaction came, and dealt heavy blows to the eastward advance of German civilization. The Hussite movement, a victorious expression of Czech nationality, is contemporaneous with the loss of German dominion in Prussia; the exodus of German students from Prague takes place a year before the defeat of the Order at Tannenburg. The particular danger from the Slavs of the north-east arose from the conversion of Lithuania, and the union of converted Lithuania to Poland. The conversion of Lithuania deprived the Order of its mission: the union of Lithuania to Poland robbed it of the security which it enjoyed while they were disunited, and gave new strength to Poland, a constant enemy to the Order which had deprived it of any outlet on the Baltic. Internally, too, the Order suffered. The Hussite wars, the feuds of Burgundian and Armagnac, the renewal of the Hundred Years’ War, all prevented it from drawing new blood from the west. But above all it lost touch with its subjects. A religious order, largely composed of immi­grants from abroad, could not permanently rule a state which had developed a national feeling of its own; and the native aristocracy, both of the towns and the country, revolted against its dominion. The rebellious elements allied themselves in­stinctively with the Poles, who thus found the absorption of the greater part of the lands of the Order an easy task. Com­mercial jealousy aided the process: the Order had alienated the towns by entering into competition with their trade; it had established a monopoly of amber and even, occasionally, of com; and its agents were spread as far afield as Bruges. This commercial policy had indeed a deeper and more fatal effect than the alienation of the towns; it secularized still further the brethren of the Order, and made them financiers instead of soldiers. Their finances were indeed excellent; they kept regular accounts, and had already developed the modern principle of separating the civil list from the expenses of the government; but when they brought the tables of money­changers into the temple, they were doing as the Templars had done before them, and were likely to suffer as the Templars had suffered.

The first blow struck at the Order, if it did not destroy its power immediately, ruined its prestige for ever. The defeat which the Polish king Ladislaus inflicted upon the knights at Tannenberg in 1410 was crushing. It brought Ladislaus little immediate gain; but it stimulated the elements of unrest in Prussia to fresh activity. The discontented clergy, especially

in Livonia; the towns, such as Danzig; the native aristocracy, organized in a league (the *Eidechsenbund,* or League of the Lizard), all sought to use their opportunity. It was in vain that the heroic grand master, Henry of Plauen (1410-1413) sought to stem the tide of disaster; he was deposed by the chapter of the Order for his pains. The success of the Hussite raids in Germany gave fresh confidence to the Slavs of Poland. The Order was at variance within itself; some of the houses of the brethren refused to obey the marshal, and the grand master quarrelled with the German master. Above all, there arose in 1440 the Prussian League *(Preussischer Bund),* in which the nobles and towns joined together, nominally for common pro­tection of their rights, but really against the Order. The League naturally sympathized with Poland, not only because Poland was the enemy of the knights, but also because under Poland it hoped to enjoy the practical liberty which Polish anarchy already seemed to offer. The ultimate result was that in 1454 an embassy of the League offered Prussia to the Polish king, and that, after many years of war, the Peace of Thom (1466) gave to Poland West Prussia, with Marienburg, Thorn, Danzig and other towns, in full possession, and, while leaving East Prussia to the Order, made the Order the vassals of Poland for the territory which it retained. Henceforth the grand master was to sit in the Polish diet on the left of the king, and half of the knights of the Order were to be Polish.

From 1466 to 1526 grand masters of the Order ruled in East Prussia as vassals of Poland. But the master of the Livonian province and the German master would not obey a Polish vassal, and went their own way; the German master took the grand master’s place as a prince of the Empire. The brethren of East Prussia, however, still sighed for independence; and they pursued the policy of choosing German princes to be grand masters of the Order, in the hope of regaining liberty by their aid. Frederick of Saxony held the office from 1498 to 1511; and he was succeeded by the Hohenzollern Albert of Brandenburg- Anspach. When Lutheranism arose, it spread rapidly in Prussia; Albert himself came into contact with Luther, and turning Protestant he secularized his territories, and (r526) made them into an hereditary duchy, still held as a fief of the king of Poland. Few of the brethren resisted; and the Order quietly ceased from the land where for three hundred years it had had its being.

Henceforth the Teutonic Order lived in Germany and in Livonia. The master of the latter province had beaten off an attack of the Russians in 1502, and secured a fifty years’ peace. But in 1561 another master followed the example of Albert, and received Courland as an hereditary fief from Poland. Henceforth the Order was confined to Germany alone. The German master—now grand master and German master in one —had his headquarters at Mergentheim in Swabia; the revenues of the states scattered throughout the twelve bailiwicks of Ger­many sustained him and his Order. The Order, clinging to its rights with the conservatism of an ecclesiastical corporation, still maintained its claims to East Prussia, and pressed them tenaciously even against the electors of Brandenburg them­selves, when they inherited the land on the failure of Albert’s descendants in 1618. The French Revolution finally deprived the Order of all its estates, and for a while of its existence. In 1801 the bailiwicks to the west of the Rhine were absorbed by France; in 1809 the Order was entirely suppressed, and its lands went to the secular principalities in which they lay. But in 1840 the Order was resuscitated in Austria, where it now exists as a semi-religious knighthood, closely connected with the Habsburgs.

It has remembered its earliest objects, and has of late years engaged during war in the ambulance service. “ At the foot of sunny vineyards,” says Treitschke, “ the house of the Teutonic Order now stands at Botzen; on its door is still emblazoned the black cross—in the middle of the shield of the Habsburg-Lorrainers.” Whatever its connexion with the Habsburgs, the Order has its real heirs in the Hohenzollerns of Prussia. When Frederic the Great gained West Prussia by

@@@1 Every house of the Order had two learned brethren, one learned in the law, one in theology. There were also elementary schools, and municipal foundations in which Latin was taught, in the dominions of the Order.