

the German emperor to win one battle against the French in Flanders, "a greater victory than which," he wrote to Catherine, "was never won anywhere." A panic seized the French knights and they fled without striking a blow. The battle is commonly known as the "Battle of the Spurs," because the French knights fled so rapidly; it is said that over three thousand were slain in the rout.

The attack on France stirred up Scotland, and James IV, who was Henry's brother-in-law, led an army into England. It was terribly defeated at the battle of Flodden Field, through the skill of the English general, the Earl of Surrey. The Scottish king, the chief of his nobility, and ten thousand of his men, were left dead on the field.

Henry was shrewd enough to see that his European allies were using him merely for their own advantage, and he made peace with France. Soon afterwards, Francis I became king of France, and Charles V succeeded to the throne of Spain. These three young and ambitious sovereigns were now leaders in the affairs of Europe. Both Francis and Charles were anxious to secure the good-will of Henry. Charles visited him in England, and Francis invited him to a meeting in France. The meeting with Francis took place on a plain near Calais, and so great was the magnificence displayed on this occasion that the meeting-place was called the "Field of the Cloth of Gold." In spite, however, of all the promises made to Francis, Henry's help was given to Charles; but afterwards, when Francis was taken prisoner, Henry went to his aid, though he exacted liberal payment for his assistance. Henry's aim was to keep the power of Francis and of Charles as nearly equal as possible, lest one or the other should become too strong for England to resist.

116. **Cardinal Wolsey.**—Henry was largely indebted to the efforts of his chancellor, Thomas Wolsey, for such success as attended his policy on the continent. Wolsey was the son of a wool merchant at Ipswich, where he was born in 1471. He graduated from Oxford at the age of fifteen and a few years later became chaplain to Henry VII.