

Field, where the king, Henry's brother-in-law, and the Scottish nobility were cut down.

Flodden, the credit for which was tactfully yielded to Henry, cast a glow over the campaigns of 1513. But perhaps their most important consequence was to lay the foundations for the emergence of Thomas Wolsey as the king's chief adviser. Though the strategy of the French campaign may have been difficult to perceive, the supply and commissariat, which Wolsey supervised, had proved a brilliant success.

The aggregation of power built up by Wolsey in the next fifteen years made him the greatest subject of modern times: only Oliver Cromwell could rival him. In 1515 Wolsey became Lord Chancellor, and used his position vigorously, both in his own court of Chancery and in the increasing use of the Council's judicial authority in the court of Star Chamber. His appointment as Cardinal in 1515 was followed in 1518 by powers as *Legate a latere*, subsequently granted for life. These enabled him to shunt his colleague William Warham, archbishop of Canterbury, to one side, and to exercise government of the Church in England. He lived in the grandest style, flaunting his wealth and basking in pomp. The state banquet given in honour of the Princess Mary in 1518 was said to be 'the like of which was never given by Cleopatra or Caligula'. His great palaces of York Place in Whitehall and Hampton Court, where he began building in 1515, were far finer than anything the king possessed. His colleges at Oxford and at Ipswich were planned on a stupendous scale: of the former, a don remarked that it was less a new college than a new university. Foreign ambassadors reported that he had the management of the whole kingdom. 'We have to deal', wrote Bishop Fox, 'with a cardinal who is not a cardinal but King.' Henry himself, remarked many observers, knew little of what was going on, content to leave irksome business to the great Cardinal, while he pursued his pleasures.

At times the power of the monarch seemed quite eclipsed. That was an illusion and one from which Wolsey never suffered. Though there has been much discussion of the objectives of Wolsey's policy, and historians have argued that the central theme was the search for European peace or service to the papacy, there is little doubt that all was directed to the power and glory of the monarch. When Wolsey lost royal favour, the edifice he had constructed so carefully collapsed like matchsticks, leaving him a forlorn, bewildered, and frightened man. The first moment of real anxiety came in 1527 when he was in France, arranging for the virtual take-over of the Catholic Church while the pope was in captivity, only to discover that the king had bypassed him with an independent approach to Clement, aimed at hastening divorce from Catherine. The royal messenger had been specifically instructed not to share his secrets with the Cardinal. Although Wolsey recovered from the immediate crisis, for the remaining two years he was struggling desperately against the tide of events.