

After driving back the Gurkhas, Lord Hastings cleared Central India of the Pindaris, a number of companies of mercenary adventurers, like those which infested Mediaeval Italy, who had been for many years the scourge of the Deccan. Directing expeditions against them from all the three presidencies, so as to enclose them in a ring, he gradually hunted them down, till their bands broke up and their leader Cheetoo fled alone into the jungle, there to be devoured by a tiger (1818). The Pindari war led Hastings into a greater struggle with the greater part of the Mahratta states. Their princes had given the freebooters secret help, hoping to weaken the English power by their aid. The leader in the plot was the Peishwa Bajee Rao, who had never ceased to regret the state of dependence in which he had been placed by the Treaty of Bassein, and wished to throw off his vassalage to the East India Company. His allies were Appa Sahib, the rajah of Nagpore, and the regents who ruled the dominion of the young Holkar, the rajah of Indore. But formidable as the confederacy appeared, Hastings crushed it without much effort. The allies were never allowed to combine: the rajah of Nagpore was defeated before the gates of his own capital (November, 1817); the armies of Holkar were scattered at Mahidpore (December, 1817). The Peishwa, hunted from his capital Poonah, was brought to bay at Ashtee (February 19, 1818), and so thoroughly beaten that he came into the British camp and surrendered himself. This war made an end of the Mahrattas as a danger to India; the confederacy was dissolved, and the Peishwa's dominion annexed to the Bombay presidency. The Nagpore rajah was deposed, the Holkar state was shorn of a third of its territories. Not only were Holkar and the new rajah of Nagpore compelled to become British vassals and to conclude subsidiary treaties with the East India Company, but their compeers Scindia and the Gaikwar of Baroda, though they had not been engaged in