

{ 1755

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# HISTORY of the WAR.

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when undoubted intelligence came, that a French fleet from Brest and Rochefort was ready to sail, with a great number of land forces on board.

By this time a very hot press was begun on the river, and in all the out-ports of England, and continued both for sea-men and land-men, till, besides the ordinary cruisers and guardships for the defence of the British coast, eleven ships of the line, and one frigate, with about 6000 men on board, were fitted out under admiral Boscawen, and sailed on the 23d of April for North America. It was by this time known, that the French fleet, which consisted of twenty-five ships of the line, besides frigates and transports, with a vast number of warlike stores, and between three and four thousand land forces under baron Dieskau, were ready to sail from Brest under admiral Macnamara. Upon this intelligence, admiral Holbourn was ordered to reinforce Boscawen with six ships of the line, and one frigate, and a great number of capital ships were put into commission. It was the 6th of May before Macnamara sailed; but he soon returned with 9 of his capital ships, and suffered the rest to proceed under the command of M. Blois de la Mothe.

When the news of so strong a squadron sailing from Brest was confirmed, the people of England grew extremely uneasy for the fate of the squadrons under Boscawen and Holbourne; and it was undoubtedly owing to the unaccountable bad management of the French, that one or both of these squadrons were not destroyed.

While all Europe was in suspense about the fate of the British and French squadrons, the preparations for a vigorous sea war were going forward in Britain with great spirit and success. Notwithstanding this, the French court still flattered itself, that Great Britain, out of tenderness for his majesty's German dominions, would desist from hostilities. Mirepoix continued to act with great sincerity, and had frequent conferences with the British ministry, who made no secret that their admirals, Boscawen in particular, had orders to fall upon the French ships wherever they could meet with them. Upon this Mirepoix made a formal declaration, in the name of his master, that the first gun that was