

stant country, a secretary of state, who was supposed to know and speak the sentiments of his master. Sir Thomas, being sensible of their superior interest in parliament, prudently resigned on the 10th of November, and the king afterwards gave the seals of his office to Mr. Fox, and lord Barrington succeeded Mr. Fox as secretary at war. The popular party, which we call the opposition being thus excluded, it laid the foundation of that confusion which marked the following year. Tho' these alterations were made, yet the treaties were very far from meeting with the unanimous approbation of both houses, tho' at length they were approved by the majority. The house next provided for the service of the ensuing year; they voted 100,000*l.* as a subsidy to the empress of Russia; 54,140*l.* to the landgrave of Hesse; and 10,000*l.* to the elector of Bavaria, after several sharp debates. As the ministry were afraid of a visit from the French, the army was augmented with ten new regiments of foot, and eleven troops of light dragoons; 50,000 seamen, including 9000 marines, were voted, besides 34,000 soldiers, which, with other expences and deficiencies the last year, swelled the supplies to the sum of 7,229,117*l.*

### C H A P. III.

*Preparations at Toulon to reduce Minorca. Noise of invading Britain, with its effects. Admiral Bying's expedition. Declaration of war. Siege of Fort St. Philip's. Messrs. Fowke's and Bying's trials. King of Prussia takes the field. Battle of Lowoschutz, &c. Affairs in Asia, from 1749 to the end of 1756.*

THE French were at this time very busy in equipping a large fleet at Toulon, for the conquest of Minorca. This is an island in the Mediterranean, about 100 miles south of Spain, and is 30 miles long, and 12 broad. It is valuable for its harbour of Mahon, where the largest fleets may ride secure from tempests or enemies, the entrance being defended with platforms of guns, and forts strongly fortified. It formerly belonged to Spain, but the English made a conquest of it in 1708;