

for *America*; and in the *Mediterranean*, where *Minorca* and *Gibraltar*¹ were the most probable objects of their destination; would have roused the attention of the *British* ministry to exert their endeavours to intercept the *American* squadron, and to cover our fortresses in the *Mediterranean* and *Streights* from insult and surprize. But, though it must be granted that *Great Britain* was, by far, superior to *France* by sea, and that the loss of *Mahon* or *Gibraltar* would be a fatal stroke to the *British* commerce, no care was taken to secure the internal strength of those fortifications, nor to cover them from an attack by sea: and, as we shall see hereafter, the squadron dispatched for the *American* service, was not appointed with that *prudence*, which was necessary to defend our interest in the new world.

M. de Cofne, who seems to have been very diligent in procuring intelligence of the measures pursued by the *French* ministry, acquaints Sir *Thomas Robinson*, by letter dated from *Paris*, 12th *March* 1755, That, from what he had been able to learn further of their armament, he had found, that ten of their large ships were not to have their lower tiers; but to have their port holes caulked up, in order to be fitted up to transport their troops. He then adds, " It is

¹ By advices in Lord *Holdernefs*'s office, dated 25th of *March*, there was a talk at *Paris* of a project to attack *Gibraltar*.

" said,