

main, before the arrival of Admiral *Byng* : and
 * that their fleet consisting of three hundred sail
 had put to sea on the 10th.

THIS was confirmed by lord *Bristol*, who
 writes from *Turin* on the 24th of *April*, that
 the *French* fleet set sail on the *tenth*, drove back
 on the *eleventh*, out again on the *twelfth*, with
 orders in case of separation, to lose no time in
 making *Minorca*; and that the marshal *Richlieu*
 expected to meet in three days with the whole
 fleet, carrying twenty four battalions, and one
 of artillery ; each battalion containing thirteen
 companies of forty men each.

CONSUL *Birtles* mentions (*April* 3d and 15th)
 that they had immense quantities of provisions
 on board of thirty two large merchant ships,
 besides four thousand sheep, and one thousand
 two hundred live oxen, to be used in drawing
 cannon, and then to be slaughtered : five thou-
 sand new tents : furnaces for heating cannon
 shot ; one hundred horses for officers ; all ma-
 terials for a siege : bricks for ovens : and that a
Swedish ship saw the *French* fleet of seventeen
 ships of war, and one hundred and thirty three
 transports, only nine leagues from *Minorca* on
 the seventeenth. That he was on board admi-
 ral *Gallassioniere*, and was informed that eighty
 five transports were then missing*.

* Letters from *Genoa*, *April* 28th, received *May* 17th.

* *April* 19th.