

the assistance of foreigners; and after all the noise and bustle that was made in trumpeting out the danger the nation was in, when it was pretended that a concatenation of events foretold this danger, that it should turn out a mere stratagem of the French court, to deceive the British ministry. "All persons of judgment (says an intelligent correspondent with lord Holderness's office, dated Jan. 21, 1756) agreed, that it was attended with insuperable difficulties, and was only intended to alarm and distress us." At this time there was neither the power nor the means, nor indeed the appearance of an embarkation sufficient to alarm England with an invasion. Another letter in lord Holderness's office, dated Dec. 10, 1755, says, "that France had no other view in all this than to gain time; that there were no dispositions on the coast of the British channel for an embarkation."

After reading a number of letters all concurring in the same advices, it will puzzle the clearest head to find any foundation for the ministerial panic, which put the nation into such confusion and expence, and was so subservient to the designs of the French upon Minorca.

At length when the destination of the enemy's armament was universally known, they seemed to rouse from their bed of lethargy; yet even then, instead of sending a squadron superior to that of the enemy, under the direction of an officer of approved conduct and courage, together with a proper reinforcement for gen. Blakeney, they sent on the 7th day of April ten ships of the line without either hospital or fire-ship, in very indifferent order, but poorly manned, and commanded by admiral Byng, an officer who had never been distinguished for his courage, nor was he at all popular in the navy, having on board, as part of his complement, a regiment of soldiers, to be landed at Gibraltar; and between forty and fifty officers, and near one hundred recruits, as a reinforcement for general Blakeney. The instructions which admiral Byng received were really amazing; he was, when he arrived at Gibraltar, to enquire whether any French squadron had passed the streights, and if they had, and as it was probable they would be gone to America, he was to detach rear admiral West, the

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