

LETTER III.

London, January 21, 1801.

SIR,

THE foundation of the system of the armed neutrality of 1780, as I have mentioned in a former letter, was laid by a declaration, published by the Empress of Russia, in the month of February of that year.

In this declaration, she announced to Europe, four new principles, or rules, of maritime law, in the establishment of which, she required that all the belligerent powers should immediately acquiesce; but, as Great Britain had just ground of exception, to every one of the principles, thus laid down for her observance, they were never recognized by the English government, even at the period of its greatest difficulties. The powers with whom we were then engaged in war, acceded, in words, to this Russian code; and were forward in their assurances respecting it; but they required, that it should likewise be acknowledged.