

No. II.

The Earl of Leicester to Queen Elizabeth.

ELIZABETH.
1588.

From the original in the
Paper-office.

[This letter, which produced the memorable and popular visit of Queen Elizabeth to her camp at Tilbury, was omitted in its proper place; and it is hoped, the subject will justify the inserting it here.]

July the 27th, 1588*.

MY most dear and gracious Lady! It is most true that these enemies that approach your kingdom and person, are your undeserved foes, and being so, hating you for a righteous cause, there is the less fear to be had of their malice or their forces; for there is a most just God that beholdeth the innocence of your heart; and the cause you are assailed for is his and his church's; and he never failed any that faithfully do put their chief trust in his goodness. He hath, to comfort you withal, given you great and mighty means to defend yourself; which means, I doubt not but your Majesty will timely and princely use; and your good God that ruleth all, will assist you and bless you with victory.

It doth much rejoice me, to find, by your letter, your noble disposition, as well in present gathering your forces, as in employing your own person in this dangerous action. And because it pleaseth your Majesty to ask mine advice touching your army, and to acquaint me with your secret determination for your person; I will plainly and according to my poor knowledge, deliver my opinion to you. For your army, it is more than time† it were gathered, and

* The Earl died in the beginning of the September following.

† Sir John Smith, an old soldier, in his curious treatise of the tactics of this time,

gives but an indifferent account of the formation and discipline of this army, which he saw encamped; so it was very fortunate the veteran troops in the Low Countries did not land.