

as to the origin of their title to the country—They send agents to England—Instruction given to them, and letters of introduction to noblemen of Low Church or Dissenting principles—They meet with a favourable reception, and return with a letter from the King requiring certain changes in their laws and modes of procedure—An affected show of compliance—Dissatisfaction of Churchmen, of Baptists, and especially of Quakers—Severe treatment of latter—A commission of inquiry issues to Colonel Nichols and others—Their instructions—General Court orders the Charter to be put into a place of concealment—Prepares to receive the Commissioners 145

CHAPTER IX.

The Commissioners arrive at Boston—Deliver a royal letter to the Government, and proceed to the Hudson to attack the Dutch settlements—The General Court in their absence petition for their withdrawal, and solicit the aid of the Puritan noblemen—Answers of the King and Lord Clarendon—General effect of Commissions of Inquiry—The franchise extended—The clergy and demagogues prepare the people for resistance—False rumours put into circulation—General Court refuses to summon the people to assemble—Commissioners inquire whether they admit the King's authority—They decline to answer, and refuse to attend before them, or to submit to an appeal—They summon the Commissioners—Close of the inquiry—Accidents to Commissioners reputed to be judgments of Heaven—The King orders the Governor and other members of the General Court to appear before him—They decline, affecting to doubt the genuineness of the order—Distinction taken between