

THE TRIAL OF JACOB LEISLER FOR HIGH TREASON. NEW YORK CITY, 1691.

THE NARRATIVE AND TRIAL.¹

James II of England was very unpopular in the Colonies of New York and New England, and a rebellion had broken out against the Governor, that he had sent there, when news came that the invasion of England by the Prince of Orange had been successful and of the accession of William to the throne. The rebels found a chief in Jacob Leisler, a New York merchant of standing, and a zealous friend of the protestant cause, who had formerly suffered imprisonment by the order of Andros,² for opposing one of his illegal acts while governor of New York.

The immediate occasion of the revolt was a report in May, 1689, that the papists intended to attack and massacre the people while at church in the Fort, and declare for James II. The people seized the Fort and appointed a committee of safety for the immediate government of the province, who signed an agreement to adhere to the prince of Orange, and, with their lives, to support the protestant religion, and they

¹*Bibliography.* *Chandler's American Criminal Trials. (See 1, Am. St. Tr. 116.) Mr. Chandler says that though the insurrection of Leisler and his adherents, which distracted the province of New York, long after the principal actors in the scene had passed from the stage, form a prominent topic of remark in the histories of the period, no detailed report of the trial was ever printed, and of the actual proceedings on that occasion but little can now be ascertained.

²ANDROS, SIR EDMUND. (1637-1714.) Born on Island of Guernsey; Administrator of Colony of New York, 1674; Governor of all New England, 1686; imprisoned and impeached in 1689, and sent to England for trial; Governor of Virginia, 1692-1698; founded William and Mary College; Governor Island of Guernsey, 1704; died in London.