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Raleigh, a statesman uniting in himself the qualities of a philosopher, a Christian, and a hero, to found a settlement in Virginia, at a place now within the bounds of North Carolina, May 13, 1607, forty-one years after the foundation for St. Augustine was laid, the colony was founded at Jamestown, on James River; the river and town being named in honor of the sovereign, James I. of England, under whose auspices the enterprise was planned and executed. In the charter granted to this colony, it was stipulated that religion should be established according to the doctrines and ritual of the Church of England; and so it continued until after the independence of the United States was achieved.

The next settlement was made by the "pilgrims," who, after a tedious voyage, and many perilous escapes, landed on the Plymouth Rock, on Monday, December 11, 1620. This was the foundation of the colonies of New-England; and it was made by a company of bold, independent, religious adventurers, who fled from persecution in the old, to seek an asylum of religious liberty in the new world.

From this small beginning the state of Massachusetts dates its origin. These pilgrims had imbibed the principles of Congregationalism, and hence this system became, in the growth of the colony, the established, and, in some respects, the intolerant religion of the land; and, with some mitigation in the sternness of its principles, which grew out of the improvements of the times and the progress of civil and religious liberty, remained so until some time after the revolution had effected the independence of these United States.