

ton, was chartered in the latter year. In 1777, a constitution, plain and simple in its provisions, and the most democratic of any of the states in the union in its principles, was formed and adopted. Under this instrument the rights of conscience are secured alike to all the citizens of the state, though the original settlers were principally of the Congregational order, being emigrants from the older New-England states. Here, therefore, religious freedom is enjoyed without any legal restraint, and all denominations sit quietly "under their own vines and fig-trees," enjoying the fruits of their industry and the blessings of a gospel ministry.

This account of the first settlement of our country has been given for the purpose of showing the materials out of which our republic was gradually framed; and though they were somewhat heterogeneous in their character, coming from different states and kingdoms of Europe, speaking a variety of languages, habituated to divers laws and usages, and professing different forms of Christianity, they were all strongly imbued with the principles of civil and religious liberty; and though some of the original projectors of the schemes of American colonization were actuated by motives of avarice, and the proprietaries of the lands were possessed strongly with aristocratic and baronial feelings and views, they were resisted by the colonists themselves as adopting principles and pursuing measures incompatible with their rights as freemen: while most of those who embarked in this grand enterprise were led to it from a dread of the persecution to which they were exposed at home, and a desire to obtain that liberty of conscience in religious matters which God, the Holy Scriptures, and the fitness of things proclaim