

CHARLES the Second, by the Grace of God King of England, Scotland, France and Ireland, Defender of the Faith &c. To all to whom these presents shall come greeting.

WHEREAS at the humble suit of our well-beloved subjects, the Governor and Company of Merchants of London trading into the East Indies, and for the honour and profit of this our Realm, and the encouragement of trade into those remote parts, We have, by our Royal Charter or Letters Patents, bearing date at Westminster the third day of April in the thirteenth year of our reign, granted unto the said Governor and Company of Merchants of London trading into the East Indies, and their successors, that they and their successors and their factors, servants and assigns, in the trade of merchandise for them and on their behalf, and not otherwise, shall for ever have use and enjoy the whole, entire and only trade and traffic, And the whole, entire and only liberty, use and privilege of trading and trafficking, and using the feat and trade of merchandise, to and from the said East Indies, and to and from all the islands, ports, havens, cities, towns and places within their said Charter, That is to say, to and from the said East Indies in the countries and parts of Asia and Africa, and to and from the islands, ports, havens, cities, creeks, towns, and places of Asia, Africa, and America, or any of them beyond the Cape of Bona Esperanza to the Straits of Magellan where any trade or traffic of merchandise may be used or had, And that it should and might be lawful to and for the said Governor and Company and their successors, from time to time and at all times from thenceforth, to erect and build such castles, fortifications, forts, garrisons, and to erect such colonies, and make such plantations at St Helena as also elsewhere within the limits and bounds of trade granted unto the said Governor and Company as aforesaid, as they in their discretions should think fit and requisite.

AND FOR the supplying of such as should be requisite to keep or be in the same, to send out of this Kingdom, to the said castles, fortifications, forts, garrisons, colonies or plantations, all kind of

clothing, provision of victuals, ammunition, and supplements necessary for such purposes, without paying of any custom, subsidy or other duty for the same. As also to transport and carry over such number of men being willing thereunto, as they shall think fit. And also to govern them in such legal and reasonable manner as the said Governor and Company should think fit, and to inflict punishment for misdemeanours or impose such fines upon them for breach of their orders as in our said Charter are expressed.

AND WHEREAS also by our said Royal Charter or Letters Patents, we have ordained that there shall be a Governor and twenty-four Committees of the said Company to be elected and appointed in such form as therein is expressed, who shall have, from time to time, the direction of the voyages of and for the said Company, and the provision of the shipping and merchandises there unto belonging; And also the sale of all merchandises, goods and other things returned in all or any of the voyages or ships of or for the said Company, and the managing and handling of all other business affairs and things belonging to the said Company. And likewise that it shall and may be lawful to and for the said Governor and Company for the time being, or the major part of them present at any public assembly, commonly called the Court General, holden for the said Company (the said Governor of the said Company being always one) from time to time to elect, nominate and appoint one of the said Company to be the Deputy to the said Governor, who from time to time in the absence of the said Governor shall exercise and execute the office of Governor of the said Company in such sort as the said Governor ought to do, as by our said Charter or Letters Patents (reference being thereunto had) amongst diverse other grants, liberties, immunities, privileges and pre-eminencies, may more fully appear.

AND WHEREAS, in pursuance of our said Royal Charter, the said Governor and Company did at their own cost and charge erect several forts and fortifications at St Helena aforesaid, being an Island situate in or near Africa, beyond the line and on this side the Cape

Bona Speranza, and place a garrison there, and were proceeding to plant and people the same, and for that purpose had transported diverse of our Subjects who were willing thereunto to inhabit there: But our said Subjects inhabiting on the said Island were lately in time of war between us and the States of the United Provinces by force of arms dispossessed thereof by the Subjects and forces of the said States, and the said States or their Subjects had and kept the quiet possession thereof for several months together.

AND WHEREAS by the blessing of God on our royal ships and forces under the command of Capt. Richard Munden the said Island and all and singular the forts, fortifications, and other the appurtenances thereunto belonging, were retaken from the said States and their Subjects, and a garrison of our Subjects placed there, By virtue or reason whereof the said Island and all and singular the forts fortifications, erections and buildings thereof, with the appurtenances, are vested in us, our heirs and successors, in the right of our Crown, and all the artillery, arms, armour, weapons, ordnance, munitions, magazines, stores, goods, chattels and moveables whatsoever, which were there found at the time our said forces retook the same (as aforesaid) do of right belong unto us and to none other.

AND WHEREAS the said Island hath been found by experience to be very convenient and commodious for our loving Subjects, the said Governor and Company of Merchants of London trading into the East Indies, for the refreshing of their servants and people in their return homewards (being often then weak and decayed in their health by reason of their long voyages under those hot climes). Whereupon our said subjects, the said Governor and Company, have besought us to regrant and confirm the same unto them.

NOW KNOW YE, that forasmuch as we have found by much experience, that the said trade into the said Indies hath been managed by the said Governor and Company to the honour and profit of this

our Realm, and to that end, and out of our earnest desire that the said Governor and Company may, by all good and lawful ways and means, be encouraged in their difficult and hazardous trade and traffic in those remote parts of the world, We therefore of our especial grace, certain knowledge and mere motion, have given, granted and confirmed, and by these presents, for us our heirs and successors, do give, grant and confirm unto the said Governor and Company of Merchants of London trading into the East Indies, their successors and assigns, all that the said Island of St Helena, With all the rights, profits, territories and appurtenances whatsoever, and all the soil, lands, fields, woods, mountains, farms, lakes, pools, harbours, rivers, bays, isles, islets, situate or being within the bounds or limits thereof with the fishing of all sorts of fish, whales, sturgeons, and all other royal fishes, in the bays, islets, and rivers within the premises and the fish therein taken, And all the veins, mines and quarries, as well royal mines as other mines, whether the same be already discovered or not discovered, and also all gold, silver, gems and precious stones, and all other whatsoever, be it of stones, metals or anything whatsoever found or to be found within the veins, mines or quarries of the said Island and premises aforesaid; And all and singular royalties, revenues, rents, customs, castles, forts, buildings and fortifications erected and to be erected on the premises or any part thereof; And all privileges, franchises, pre-eminencies and hereditaments whatsoever, within the same or to them or any of them belonging or in any wise appertaining, in as large and ample manner to all intents, constructions and purposes as we ourself now have and enjoy (or may or can have or enjoy) the same by virtue and force of our said conquest thereof or otherwise howsoever. And them, the said Governor and Company of Merchants of London trading into the East Indies, their successors and assigns, we do by these presents for us, our heirs and successors, make, create and constitute, the true and absolute Lords and Proprietors of the Island and premises aforesaid and of every part and parcel thereof, Saving and always reserving to us, our heirs and successors, the faith and allegiance to us due and

belonging, and our royal power and sovereignty of and over our Subjects and inhabitants there, To have, hold, possess and enjoy the said Island, and all and singular other the premises herein before granted or mentioned to be granted unto them, the said Governor and Company of Merchants of London trading into the East Indies, their successors and assigns for ever. To the only use of them the said Governor and Company their successors and assigns for ever more. To be holden of us, our heirs and successors, as of the manner of East Greenwich in the County of Kent, in free and common socage, and not in capite, nor by knight's service.

AND KNOW YE FURTHER, that we of our more special grace, certain knowledge, and mere motion, have given, granted, and confirmed, and by these presents do give, grant and confirm unto the said Governor and Company, their successors and assigns, to their own proper use and benefit, All that artillery and all and singular arms, weapons, ordinance, munitions, powder, shot, victuals, magazines, stores, ammunition and provision of war, and other provisions whatsoever. And all and singular ships, junks, vessels and boats, and all manner of merchandise and wares, clothing, implements, beasts, cattle, horses and mares, which are or remain upon or within the premises, or any part thereof, and belong to us in any manner of wise.

AND WE ARE PLEASED, and do by these presents for us, our heirs and successors, grant unto the said Governor and Company of Merchants of London trading into the East Indies, that for the better supply of the said Island (being a place of no trade or traffic) and of the castles, fortifications, forts, garrisons, colonies and plantations, erected and placed (or to be erected and placed) in or upon the said Island or within the precincts and limits thereof and of the inhabitants there to send out of this Kingdom to the said Island and to the said castles, fortifications, forts, garrisons, colonies, plantations and Inhabitants thereof: All kind of clothing, provisions of victuals, ammunition, ordnance, and supplements necessary for such purpose,

without paying any custom, subsidy or other duty for the same. As also to transport and carry over such numbers of men being willing thereunto, as they shall think fit.

AND FORASMUCH as we have made such grant of the said Island and premises to the said Governor and Company of Merchants of London trading to the East Indies, and their successors as is before mentioned: It is therefore needful that such powers, privileges and jurisdictions be granted unto them, as be requisite for the good government and safety thereof, and of the inhabitants thereof.

KNOW YE THEREFORE further that we, reposing especial trust and confidence in their fidelity, justice, wisdom and provident circumspection, have granted, and by these presents for us, our heirs and successors, do grant, unto the said Governor and Company of Merchants of London trading into the East Indies, and their successors, that it shall and may be lawful to and for the said Governor and Company for the time being, or the major part of them present at any public assembly commonly called the General Court, holden for the said Company (the Governor of the said Company or his Deputy being always one) or for the said Governor or his Deputy and Committees for the time being, or the major part of them present at any assembly commonly called the Court of Committees, holden for the said Company (the said Governor or his Deputy being likewise always one) From time to time to ordain, make, establish, and under their common seal to publish any laws, order, ordinances and constitutions whatsoever, for the good government and other use of the said Island and premises and the inhabitants thereof, and the same or any of them again and from time to time to revoke, abrogate and change as they in their discretions shall think fit and convenient, And also to impose, limit and provide such pains, punishments and penalties by fines, amercements, imprisonments of body, and where the quality of the offence shall require, by taking away life or member, as to the said Governor and Company for the time being or the major part of them present at any

such General Court, or to the said Governor or his Deputy and Committees of the said Company, or the major part of them present at any such Court of Committees as aforesaid (the said Governor or his Deputy being always one) shall seem necessary, requisite and convenient for the observation of the same laws, constitutions, orders and ordinances, and for the punishment of offenders against the same, so always as the said laws, constitutions, orders, ordinances, pains, punishments and penalties be consonant to reason, and not repugnant or contrary but as near as may be agreeable to the laws of this our Realm of England, and subject to the savings herein before contained.

AND ALSO of our further special grace, certain knowledge and mere motion, we do by these presents for us, our heirs and successors, give and grant unto the said Governor and Company, and their successors, that it shall and may be lawful to and for the said Governor, or his Deputy and Committees of the said Company for the time being, or the major part of them at any of their said Courts commonly called the Court of Committees, holden for the said Company, from time to time to nominate, make, constitute, ordain and confirm, by such name or names, stile or stiles, as to them shall seem good, such Governor or Governors, Officers or Ministers, Chief Factors, and Agents, and other factors and agents, as shall be by them thought fit and needful to be made, and used for the government, and other use and uses, of the said Island of St Helena, and of the castles, forts, fortifications, and other the premises hereby granted; And such Governor or Governors, Officers or Ministers, Factors or Agents, at their discretion to revoke, discharge, alter and change, and also to discharge, alter and change all and singular the Governor and Governors, Officers and Ministers, as heretofore have been by us made and appointed for the government and other use of the said Island of St Helena, or of any the forts, fortifications, limits or precincts thereof.

AND WE are also pleased, and by these presents for us, our heirs and successors, do give and grant unto the said Governor and Company and their successors, that it shall and may be lawful to and for the said Governor, or his Deputy and Committees of the said Company for the time being, or the major part of them by themselves or by their Governor or Governor's Officers, and Ministers, Factors and Agents, to be ordained and appointed as aforesaid according to the natures and limits of their respective offices and places within the said Island *of* St Helena the territories and precincts thereof to correct, punish, govern and rule all and every the Subjects of us, our heirs and successors that now do, or at any time hereafter shall, inhabit within the said Island and the precincts thereof according to such laws, orders, ordinances and constitutions as by the said Governor and Company at any General Court or Court of Committees as aforesaid shall be established, and to do all and every other thing and things which to the complete establishment of justice do belong, by court, sessions, forms of judicature and manners of proceedings, therein like unto those established and used in this our Realm of England, although in these presents express mention be not made thereof; And by Judges and other Officers, by them the said Governor or his Deputy and Committees of the said Company or the major part of them, or by the said Chief Governor or Governors of the said Island *of* St Helena to be delegated to award, process, hold pleas, judge and determine all actions, suits and causes whatsoever of any kind or nature whatsoever; And to execute all and every such judgement, so always the said laws, ordinances and proceedings be reasonable, and not repugnant or contrary, but as near as may be agreeable to the laws, statutes, government and policy, of this our Kingdom of England, and subject to the savings herein.

AND WE DO ALSO confirm and grant unto the said Governor and Company, and their successors, as also to all and every such Governor or Governors or other Officers, Ministers and Commanders as shall be appointed by said Governor or his Deputy,

and Committees of the said Company as aforesaid, To have power and authority of government or command, in and over the said Port and Island, and that they and every of them shall and lawfully may, from time to time and at all times for ever hereafter, for their several defence and safety, encounter, expulse, repel, resist, and subdue, retain and possess by force of arms, as well by sea as by land, and by all ways and means whatsoever, all and every such person and persons whatsoever, as without the special licence and authority of us, our heirs and successors, or of the said Governor and Company and their successors, shall attempt to inhabit within the precincts and limits of the said Island; And also all and every such person and persons whatsoever, as shall enterprise and attempt any destruction, invasion, hurt, detriment or annoyance thereunto, or to our Subjects inhabiting within the same or any part thereof, or to their or any of their goods, merchandises, interests, properties or estates whatsoever;

AND WE DO FURTHER, for us our heirs and successors, hereby declare, ordain and grant, that such principal Governor or Governors of the said Island as from time to time shall be duly authorised and appointed in manner aforesaid, shall have full power and authority in their respective places, and charges to use and exercise all such powers and authorities in cases of rebellion, mutiny or sedition, of refusing to serve in wars, flying to the enemy, forsaking colours or ensigns, or other offences against law, custom, and discipline military, in as large and ample manner, to all intents and purposes, whatsoever as any Captain-General of our army, by virtue of his office, have used and accustomed, and may or might lawfully do.

AND OF OUR more special grace, certain knowledge and mere motion, we do for us, our heirs and successors, further ordain and grant, that it shall and may be lawful to and for the Governor of the said Company, or his Deputy for the time being, by the appointment of the greater part of Committees for the said Company, assembled in any of their said Courts commonly called the Court of Committees, from time to time and at all times hereafter to

administer such a formal and legal Oath as by their discretion shall be reasonably devised unto any person or persons to be employed in, for or concerning the said Island *of* St Helena, or any part thereof, As well for the true and faithful execution and performance of their respective offices and employments, as also for the rendering a just, true and perfect in writing of all such goods, moneys, and other things as by reason of their said offices and employments shall have come to their respective hands, unto the said Governor and Company, or unto such person or persons, as shall be by them appointed to take the same. And also to all Governors, Officers and Ministers, Agents and Factors of what nature soever, or by what title soever they shall be called, which shall be lawfully sent or placed in the said Island of St Helena, as well for the good government thereof and of the inhabitants there, as for ordering, safe keeping and true accounting of and for all such lands, goods, profits, commodities, matters, and things whatsoever as shall be committed to their or any of their government's charge, care and custody. And also to such person or persons as the Governor of the said Company, or his Deputy with the major part of the said Committees for the time being, shall think meet for the examination, or clearing the truth in any cause whatsoever concerning the said Company and relating to the said Island *of* St Helena, or concerning any business from thence proceeding or there unto belonging.

AND WE DO FURTHER also for us, our heirs and successors, give and grant unto the said Governor and Company and their successors, that the Chief Governor or Governors resident in the said Island, by what names or titles soever they be called, shall have the like power to minister a formal and legal oath to all other officers and inferior ministers whatsoever in the said Island *of* St Helena, for the just, true and faithful discharge of their several places, duties and services, As also unto any other person whatsoever for the examination, testifying and clearing of the truth in any cause whatsoever, as well concerning the said Island *of* St Helena as any other particular business there

arising, for the maintaining and administration of peace and justice amongst the inhabitants of the said Island, or any other persons in that place.

AND OUR PLEASURE IS, and we do for us, our heirs and successors, declare by these presents, that all and every the persons being our Subjects, which do or shall inhabit within the said Port and Island, and every of their children and posterity, which shall happen to be born within the precincts and limits thereof, shall have and enjoy, all liberties, franchises, immunities, capacities and abilities of Free Denizens, and Natural Subjects, within any of our Dominions, to all intents and purposes as if they had been abiding and born within this our Kingdom of England, or in any other of our Dominions.

AND LASTLY, our will and pleasure is, and we do by these presents for us, our heirs and successors, ordain and grant unto the said Governor and Company of Merchants of London trading into the East Indies and their successors, That these our Letters Patents, and all and singular grant and clauses herein contained, shall be and continue firm, strong, sufficient, and available in the law, and shall be construed, reputed, and taken as well to the meaning and intent as to the words of the same, most graciously and favourably for the best advantage and benefit of the said Governor and Company and their successors, Although express mention be not made herein of the true yearly value and certainty of the premises or any part thereof, or of any other gifts or grants made by us, or by any of our ancestors or predecessors to them the said Governor or Company, or any other person or persons whatsoever, or any omission or defect herein or any law, statute, act, provision, order, ordinance, proclamation or restraint heretofore had made published, ordained or provided, or any other clause matter, or thing whatsoever to the contrary thereof in any wise notwithstanding, In witness whereof, we have caused these our Letters to be made Patents, witness our self at Westminster

the sixteenth day of December, in the five and twentieth year of Our
Reign.

By Writ of Privy Seal
Pigot

This is the modern spelling transcription of the Charter, kindly made available by Jeff Cant, and as it appears in Chapter 10 of **His Majesty's Grant of the Island of St. Helena**, edited by Jeff Cant.

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