

# Charter Granted by Queen Elizabeth to the East India Company, 31 December 1600

ELIZABETH, by the Grace of God, Queen of England, France, and Ireland, Defender of the Faith & c. To all our officers, ministers, and subjects, and to all other people, as well within this our realm of England as elsewhere, under our obedience and jurisdiction, or otherwise, unto whom these our Letters Patents shall be seen, showed, or read, greeting. Whereas our most dear and loving Cousin, George, Earl of Cumberland, and our well-beloved subjects, Sir John Hart, of London, and others (here follow 214 other names which are omitted) have of our certain knowledge been petitioners unto us, for our Royal assent and licence to be granted unto them, that they, at their own adventures, costs, and charges, as well for the honour of this our realm of England, as for the increase of our navigation, and advancement of trade of merchandize, within our said realms and the dominions of the same, might adventure and set forth one or more voyages, with convenient number of ships and pinnaces, by way of traffic and merchandize to the East Indies, in the countries and parts of Asia and Africa and to as many of the islands, ports and cities, towns and places, thereabouts, as where trade and traffic may by all likelihood be discovered, established or had; divers of which countries, and many of the islands, cities and ports, thereof, have long since been discovered by others of our subjects, albeit not frequented in trade of merchandize. Know ye, therefore, that we, Greatly tendering the honor of our nation, the wealth of our people, and the encouragement of them, and others of our loving subjects in their good enterprizes, for the increase of our navigation, and the advancement of our lawful traffick to the benefit of our Commonwealth, have of our special grace, certain knowledge, and mere motion, given and granted and by these presents, for us, our heirs and successors do give and grant unto our said loving subjects before in these presents expressly named, that they and every of them from henceforth be, and shall be one body corporate and politick, in deed and in name, by the name of the Governor and Company of Merchants of London, trading into the East Indies, and them by the name of the Governor and Company of Merchants of London, trading to the East Indies, one body and corporate and politick, in deed and in name, really and fully for us our heirs and successors we do order, make, ordain, constitute, establish and declare, by these presents, and that by the same name of Governor and company of merchants of London, trading into the East Indies, they shall have succession, and that they and their successors, by the name of the Governor and Company of Merchants of London, trading into the East Indies, be and shall be, at all times hereafter, persons able and capable in law, and a body corporate and politick and capable in law to have, purchase, receive, possess, enjoy and retain lands, rents, privileges, liberties, jurisdictions, franchises and hereditaments of whatsoever kind, nature, and quality so ever they be, to them and their successors. And also to give, grant, demise, alien, assign and dispose lands, tenements and hereditaments, and to do and execute all and singular other things, by the same name that to them shall or may appertain to do. And that they and their successors, by the name of the Governor and Company Merchants of London, trading into the East Indies, may plead and be impleaded, answer and be answered, defend and be defended, in whatsoever courts and places, and before whatsoever judges and justices, and other persons and officers, in all and singular actions, pleas, suits, quarrels, causes, and demands whatsoever, of whatsoever kind, nature or sort, in such a manner and form, as any other, our liege people of this realm of England, being persons able and capable in law, may or can have, purchase, receive, possess, enjoy, retain, give, grant, demise, alien, assign, dispose, plead and be impleaded, answer and be answered, defend and be defended, release and be released, do permit and execute. And that the said Governor and Company of Merchants of London, trading into the East Indies, and their successors, may have a common seal, to serve for all the causes and business of them and their successors. And that it shall and may be lawful to the said Governor and Company, and their successors, the same seal, from time to time, at their will and pleasure, to break, change, and to make new or alter, as to them shall seem expedient. And further, we will, and by these presents, for us, our heirs and successors, we do ordain, that there shall be from henceforth one of the same Company to be elected and appointed, in such form, as hereafter in these presents is expressed, which shall be called the Governor of the said Company, and that there shall be from henceforth twenty-four of the said Company, to be elected and appointed in such form, as hereafter in these presents is expressed, which shall be called the committees of the said Company, who, together with the

Governor of the said Company for the time being shall have the direction of the voyages, of or for the said Company, and the provision of the shipping and merchandizes thereto belonging, and also the sale of all merchandizes returned in the voyages, of or for the said Company, and the managing and handling of all other things belonging to the said Company and for the better execution of this our will and grant in this behalf we have assigned, nominated, constituted and made, and by these presents, for us, our heirs and successors, we do assign, nominate, constitute and make, the said Thomas Smith, Alderman of London, to be the first and present Governor of the said Company, to continue in the said office, from the date of these presents, until another of the said Company shall in due manner be chosen and sworn unto the said office, according to the ordinances and provisions hereafter in these presents expressed and declared, if the said Thomas Smith shall so long live; and also we have assigned, nominated and appointed, and by these presents, for us, our heirs and successors, we do assign, nominate, constitute and make, the said Paul Banning, Leonard Hollyday, John Moore, Edward Holmeden, Richard Staper, Thomas Cordell, William Garway, Oliver Style, James Lancaster, Richard Wiseman, Francis Cherry, Thomas Allabaster, William Romney, Roger How, William Chambers, Robert Sandye, John Eldred, Richard Wiche, John Hylord, John Middleton, John Comb, William Harrison, Nicholas Ling and Robert Bell, to be the twenty-four first and present committees of the said Company, to Continue in the said office committees of the said Company from the date of these preset for one whole year next following. And further we will grant, by these presents, for us, our heirs and successors, 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 more part of them, present at a publick assembly, commonly called the Court, holden for the said Company, the Governor of the said Company being always one from time to time, to elect, nominate and appoint one the said Company, to be deputy to the said Governor, which deputy shall take a corporal oath, before the Governor and five or more of the committees of the said Company for the time being, well, faithfully and truly to execute his said office of deputy to the Governor of the said Company, and after his oath, so taken, shall and may from time to time, in the absence of the said Governor, exercise and execute the office Governor of the said Company, in such sort as the said Governor ought to do: and further we will and grant, by these presents, for us, our heirs and successors, unto the said Governor and Company of Merchants of London, trading into the East Indies, and their successors, that they or the greater part of them whereof the Governor for the time being or his deputy to be one, from time to time, and at all times hereafter shall and may have authority and power yearly and every year, on the first day of July, or at any time within six days after that day, to assemble and meet together, in some convenient place, to be appointed from time to time by the governor, or in his absence by the deputy of the said Governor for the time being, and that they being assembled, it shall and may be lawful to and for the said Governor, or deputy of the said Governor, and the said Company for the time being or the greater part of them which then shall happen to be present, whereof the Governor of the said Company or his deputy for the time being to be one, to elect and nominate one of the said Company which shall be Governor of the said Company for one whole year from thence next following, which person, being so elected and nominated to be governor of the said company, as aforesaid before he be admitted to the execution of the said office, shall take a corporal oath before the last Governor being his predecessor or his deputy, and, any six or more of the committees of the said Company for the time being, that he shall, from time to time, well and truly execute the office of Governor of the said Company, in all things concerning the same; and that immediately after the said oath so taken, he shall and may execute and use the said office of Governor of the said Company, for one whole year, from thence next following : And in like sort we will and grant, that as well every one above-named to be of the said Company fellowship as all others hereafter to be admitted, or free of the said Company, shall take a corporal oath before the Governor of the said Company, or his deputy for the time being, to such effect, as by the said Governor and Company, or the more part of them, in any public court to be held from the said Company, shall be in reasonable manner set down and devised, before they shall be allowed, or admitted to trade or traffick, as a freeman of the said Company. And further we will and grant, by these presents for us, our heirs and successors, unto the said Governor and Company of Merchants of London, trading into the East Indies, and their successors, that the said Governor, or the deputy of the said Governor, and the Company and their successors, for the time being, or the greater part of them, whereof the Governor, or the deputy of the Governor, from time to time, to be one, shall and may, from time to time, and at all times hereafter, have authority and power, yearly and every year, on the first day of July, or at any time within six days after that day, to assemble and meet together, in some convenient place, to be from time to time appointed, by the said Governor of the said Company, or in his absence, by his deputy: And that they being so assembled, it shall and may be lawful, to and for the said Governor or his deputy, and the Company for the time being, or the greater part of them,

which then shall happen to be present, whereof the Governor of the said Company, or his deputy for the time being, to be one, to elect and nominate twenty-four of the said Company, which shall be committee of the said Company, for one whole year, from thence next ensuing, which person being so elected and nominated to be committees of the said Company, as aforesaid, before they be admitted to the execution of their said offices, shall take a corporal oath, before the Governor or his deputy, and any six or more of the said committees of the said Company, being their last predecessors for the time being, that they and every of them shall well and faithfully perform their said office of committees, in all things concerning the same, and that immediately after the said oath so taken, they shall and may execute and use their said offices of committees of the said Company, for one whole year, from thence next following and moreover our will and pleasure is, and by these presents for us our heirs and successors, we do grant unto the said Governor and Company of Merchants of London, trading in the East Indies, and to their successors, that when and as often as shall happen, the Governor of the said Company for the time being, at any time within one year, after that he shall be nominated, elected and sworn to the office of Governor of the said company, as is aforesaid, to die or to be remove from the said office, which governor, not demeaning himself well in his said office, we will to be removeable at the pleasure of the said Company, or the greater part of them, which shall be present, at any of their publick assemblies, commonly called their general court, holden for the said Company, that then and so often it shall and may be lawful, to and for the residue of the said Company for the time being, or the greater part of them, within convenient time after the death or removing of any such Governor, to assemble themselves in such convenient place as they shall think fit, for the election of the Governor of the said Company : And that the said Company, or the greater part of them, being then and there present shall and may, then and there, before their departure from the said place, elect and nominate one other of the said company to be Governor of the same Company, in the place or steal of him that so died or was so removed, which person, being so elected, and nominated to the office of Governor of the said company, shall have and exercise the said office for and during the residue of the said year, taking first a corporal oath as is aforesaid, for the due execution thereof; and this to be done from time to time, so often as the case shall so require. And also our will and pleasure is, and by these presents, for us, our heirs and successors, we do grant unto the said Governor and Merchants of London, trading into the East-Indies, and to their successors, that when and as often as it shall happen, any of the committees of the said Company for the time being, at any time within one year, next after that they or any of them shall be nominated, elected, and sworn to the office of committees of the said Company, as is aforesaid, to die or be removed from the said office, which committees, not demeaning themselves well in their said office, we will to be removeable, at the pleasure of the said Governor and Company or the greater part of them, whereof the Governor of the said Company, for the time being, or his deputy for the time being, to be one that then and so often, it shall and may be lawful, to and for the said Governor and Company for the time being, or the greater part of them, whereof the Governor for the time being, or his deputy, to be one, within convenient time, after the death or removing of any of the said committees, to assemble themselves in such convenient place, as is or shall be usual and accustomed, for the election of the Governor of the said Company, or where else the Governor of the said Company for the time being, or his deputy, shall appoint; and the said Governor and Company, or the greater part of them, whereof the Governor for the time being, his deputy, to be one, being then and there present, shall and may then and there, before their departure from the said place elect and nominate one or more of the said Company, to be committees of the same Company, in the places and steads, place or stead, of him or them that so died, or were or was so removed, which person or persons, so elected and nominated to the office or offices of committee, or committees, of the said Company, shall have and exercise the said office and offices during the residue of the said year, taking first a corporal oath as is aforesaid, for the due execution thereof, and this to be done from time to time, so often as the case shall require. And further we do, by these presents, for us, our heirs and successors, will and grant unto the said Governor and Company of Merchants of London, trading into the East Indies, and their successors, that they, and all that are or shall be of the said Company of Merchants of London, trading into the East Indies, and every of them, and all the sons of them, at their several ages of one and twenty years or upwards: And further, all such the apprentices, factors or servants of them, and of every of them, which hereafter shall be employed by the said Governor and Company, in the said trade of merchandize, of or to the East-Indies, beyond the seas, or any other the places aforesaid, in any part of the said East Indies, or other the places aforesaid, shall and may, by the space of fifteen years, from the feat of the birth of our Lord God last past, before the date hereof, freely traffick and use the trade of merchandize, by seas, in and by such ways and passages already found out and discovered, or which hereafter shall be found out and discovered, as they shall esteem and take to be fittest, into and from the said East-Indies, in the countries and parts of Asia and Africa; and into and from all the islands, ports,

havens, cities, creeks, towns and places of Asia and Africa, and America or any of them, beyond the cape of Bona Esperanza to the straits of Magellan, where any trade or traffick of merchandize may be used or had, and to and from every of them, in such order, manner, form, liberty and condition, all intents and purposes, as shall be, from time to time, any publick assembly or court, held by or for the said Governor and Company, by or between them of the said fellowship or Company of Merchants of London, trading into the East Indies, or the more part of them, for the time being, present such assembly or court, the Governor, or his deputy, being always present at such court or assembly, limited and agree and not otherwise, without any molestation, impeachment, disturbance, any statute, usage, diversity of religion or faith or any other cause or matter whatsoever, to the contrary notwithstanding : So always the same trade be not undertaken nor addressed to any country, island, port, haven, city, creek, town or place, already in the lawful and actual possession any such Christian prince or state, as at this present is, or any time hereafter shall be in league or amity with us, or heirs or successors, and who doth not or will not accept of such trade, but doth overtly declare and publish the sat to be utterly against his or their good will and liking. And further our will and pleasure is, and by these presents, for our heirs and successors, we do grant unto the said Governor and Company of Merchants of London, trading into the East Indies, and to their successors, that it shall and may be lawful to and for the said Governor and Company, and their successors, from time to time to assemble themselves, for or about any the matters, causes, affairs or businesses of the said trade, in any place or places, for the same convenient, during the said term of fifteen years, within our dominions or elsewhere and there to hold court for the said Company, and the affairs thereof; and that also it shall and may be lawful, to and for them, or the more part of them, being so assembled, and that shall then and there be present, in any such place or place whereof the Governor or his deputy for the time being, to be one, to make, ordain, and constitute such, and so many reasonable laws, constitutions, orders and ordinances, as to them, or the greater part of them, being then and there present, shall seem necessary and convenient, for the good government of the same Company, and of all factors, masters, mariners and other officers, employed or to be employed in any of their voyages, and for the better advancement and continuance of the said trade and traffick, and the same laws, constitutions, orders and ordinance, so made, to put in use and execute accordingly, and at their pleasure to revoke or alter the same, or any of them as Octavian shall require; and that the said Governor and Company, so often as they shall make, ordain or establish any such laws, constitutions, orders or ordinances, in form aforesaid, shall and may lawfully impose, ordain, limit and provide such pains, punishments and penalties, by imprisonment of Body, or by Fines and Amerciaments, or by all or any of them upon and against all Offenders, contrary to such laws, constitutions, orders and ordinances, or any of them as to the said Governor and Company for the time being, or the greater part of them, then and there being present, 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 the same fine and amerciaments shall and may levy, take and have, to the use of the said Governor and Company, and their successors, without the impediment of us, our heirs or successors, or of any the officers or ministers of us, our heirs or successors, and without any account thereof, to us, our heirs or successors, to be rendered or made; all and singular which laws Constitutions, orders and ordinances, so as aforesaid to be made, we will to be duly observed and kept, under the pain and penalties therein to be contained; so always as the said laws, orders, constitutions, ordinances, imprisonments, fines and amerciaments be reasonable, and not contrary or repugnant to the laws, statutes or customs of this our realm. And for as much as the said Governor and Company of Merchants of London, trading into the East Indies, have not yet experienced of the kinds of commodities and merchandizes, which are or will be vendible, or to be uttered in the said parts of the East Indies, and therefore shall be driven to carry to those parts, in their voyages outward, divers and sundry commodities, which are likely to be returned again to this our realm: we therefore of our especial grace, certain knowledge and mere motion, for the better encouraging of the said governor and Company of Merchants of London, trading into the said East Indies, and for the advancement of the said trade, do grant unto the said Governor and Company, and to their successor, that they and their successors, during the four first voyages, which they shall make, or set forth, for or towards the said East Indies, shall and may transport, and carry out of our realm of England, and the ports, creeks and havens thereof, all such and so much goods and merchandizes, being goods and merchandizes lawfully passable and transportable out of this realm, not prohibited to be transported by any law or statute of this realm, as shall be by them, their factors or assigns, shipped any ship or ships, vessel or vessels to be employed in any of the said four first voyages, free of custom, subsidy or poundage, or any other duties or payments, to us or our successors due or belonging, for the shipping or transporting of same, or any of them; and yet nevertheless our will and pleasure is and we do, by these presents, straightly charge and command, that all and every such goods and merchandizes, so to be transported out of

this realm, from time to time during the said four first voyages, as is aforesaid, shall, from time to time, be duly entered by the customer, controller other officer of such port, creek or place, where the said goods and merchandizes shall happen to be shipped and loaden, before such time as the same shall be shipped, loaden, to be transported as is aforesaid: And also of further especial grace, certain knowledge and mere motion, do, for us, our heirs and successors, grant to and with the said Governor and Company of Merchants of London, trading in the East Indies, and their successors, that when and as often at any time, during the said time and space of fifteen years, as any custom, poundage, subsidy, or other duties, shall due and payable unto us, our heirs, or successors, for a goods, wares, or merchandizes whatsoever, to be returned out or from any the islands, ports, havens, cities, towns or places aforesaid, unto our port of London, or any of the havens, creeks, members or places to the same port belonging, that the customers and all other officers for the time being, of our heirs or successors, for or concerning receipts of custom poundage, subsidies or other duties unto whom it shall appertain, shall upon the request of the Governor and Company of the said Merchants of London, trading into the East Indies, or any their agents, factors or assigns give unto the said Governor and Company, their agents, factors or assigns, six months' time, for payment of the one half, and after those six months ended, other six months' time, for the payment of the other half, of their said customs, poundage, or other subsidy or duties, receiving good and sufficient bonds, with surety, to the use of us, our heirs and successors, for the true payment of the same accordingly; and upon receipt of the said Bonds, with surety, from time to time, to give unto the said Governor and Company of Merchants of London, trading into the East Indies, for the time being their agents, factors or assigns, their cocket or other warrant, to take out and receive on land the same goods, wares, or merchandizes, by virtue thereof, without any disturbance; and that also as often as at any time, during the said time of years, any goods, wares or merchandizes of the said Governor and Company, for the time being, laden from our port of London, or any the creeks, members or places to the same port belonging, to be transported to or towards any the islands, ports, havens, cities, towns or places aforesaid, shall happen to miscarry or be lost, before their safe arrival or discharge in the ports, for and to which the same shall be sent, that then and so often so much custom poundage, subsidies, or other duties as they answered to us, for the same, before their going forth of our said ports, havens or creeks, shall, after due proof made, before the treasurer of England, for the time being, of the said loss, and the just quantity thereof, be, by virtue hereof, allowed to the said Governor and Company, their agents or factors, by warrant of the said treasurer, to the said customers or officers, in the next goods, wares or merchandizes, that the said Governor and Company, or their successors, shall or may ship, for or towards those parts, according to the true rates of the customs, poundage or subsidies, before paid for the goods, wares or merchandizes, so lost or miscarrying, or any part thereof. And for that, the said Governor and Company of merchants of London, trading into the East Indies, are like to bring to this our realm, a much greater quantity of foreign commodities, from the parts of the said East Indies, than can be spent for the necessary use of the same our realm, which of necessity must be transported into other countries, and there vended, we, for us, our heirs and successors, of our especial grace, certain knowledge and mere motion, do grant to and with the said Governor and Company of Merchants of London, trading into the East Indies, and their successors, that at all times, from time to time, during the space of thirteen months, next after the discharge of any the same foreign commodities, so to be brought in, the subsidies, poundage, customs, and other duties for the same, being first paid or compounded for as aforesaid, it shall be lawful for the said Governor and Company, and their successors, or any other the natural subjects of this our realm, which may or shall buy the same of them, to transport the same in English bottoms, freely out of this realm as well ungarbled as garbled, without payment of any further custom, poundage, or further subsidy, to us, our heirs or successors for the same; whereof the subsidy, poundage, customs or other duties, be so formerly paid or compounded for as aforesaid, so proved; and the said customer or other officer or officers, to whom it shall in that behalf appertain, for the time being, by virtue hereof, shall, upon due and sufficient proof thereof, made in the custom-house of or belonging to the same port of London, give them sufficient cocket or certificate for safe passing out thereof accordingly : And to the end deceit be used herein, to us, our heirs or successors, certificate shall be brought from the collector of the customs, subsidies poundage or other duties, inwards, of us, our heirs successors, to the collector of the customs, subsidy, poundage or other duties, outward, of us, our heirs and success that the said goods, wares and merchandizes, have, within the time limited, answered their due customs, subsidies, poundage or other duties, for the same inwards: And moreover, we of our further especial grace, certain knowledge and mere motion, have granted, and by these presents, for our heirs and successors, do grant unto the said Governor and Company of Merchants of London trading into the East Indies, that it shall and may be lawful for them, their factors or assigns, in their first voyage or fleet, which now in preparing for their first adventure to the said East Indies, to

transport out of this our realm of England, all such foreign coin of silver either Spanish or other foreign silver as they have procured, prepared and gotten, or shall procure, prepare or get, as likewise all such other coin of silver, as they have procured, or shall procure, to be coined in our mint, within our tower of London, out of such plate or bullion, as is or shall be provided, by the said Governor and Company of Merchants of London, trading into the East Indies, their factors or assigns before the going forth of the same fleet in this their first voyage, so as the whole quantity of coin, or monies to be transported, in this their said first voyage, do not exceed the value or sum of £30,000 sterling, and so as the sum of £6,000, at the least, parcel of the said sum of £30,000 be first coined in our mint, within our tower of London, before the same shall be transported as aforesaid, any law, statute, restraint or prohibition, in that behalf notwithstanding: And in like manner, of our like especial grace, certain knowledge and mere motion, we have granted, and by these presents, do for us, our heirs and successors 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, and their successors, after the said first voyage, set forth yearly, for and during the residue of the said term of fifteen years, to ship and transport out of this our realm of England, or dominions of the same, in any their other voyages, to or towards any the parts, aforesaid, in form aforesaid mentioned, all such foreign coin of silver, Spanish or other foreign silver, or bullion of silver, as they shall, during the said term, bring or cause to be brought into this realm of England, from the parts beyond the seas, either in the same kind, sort, stamp or fashion, which it shall have when they bring it in, or any other form, stamp or fashion, to be coined within our mint, within our tower of London, at their pleasure; so as the whole quantity of coin or monies, by them to be transported, in any their said voyages, during the residue of the said terms, do not exceed the value or sum of £30,000 in any one voyage; and so as the sum of £6,000 at the least, parcel of the said sum or value of £30,000, so to be transported as aforesaid, be first coined within our said tower of London, before the same shall be transported in any of the said voyages, any law, statute, restraint or prohibition, in that behalf, in anywise notwithstanding: And further we of our ample and abundant grace, mere motion and certain knowledge, 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 they and their successors, and their factors, servants and assigns, in the trade of merchandize, for them and on their behalf, and not otherwise, shall, for the said term of fifteen years, have, use, and enjoy, the whole entire and only trade and traffick, and the whole entire and only liberty, use and privilege of trading and trafficking, and using feat and trade of merchandize to and from the said East Indies, and to and from all the islands, ports, havens, cities, towns and places aforesaid, in such manner and form as is above mentioned; and that they the said Governor and Company of Merchants of London, trading into the East Indies and every particular and several person, that now is or that hereafter shall be of that Company, or incorporation, shall have full and free authority, liberty, faculty, license and power, in form aforesaid, to trade and traffick to and from the said East Indies, an all and every the parts thereof, in form aforesaid, according to the orders, ordinances and agreements hereafter to be made and agreed upon, by the said Governor and Company of Merchants of London, trading into the East Indies, and their successors or the more part of them, present at any court or publick assembly, of or for the said Company, the Governor of the said Company, or his deputy for the time being, being always present, at such court or assembly, and not otherwise: and for that the ships, sailing into the said East Indies, must take their due and proper times, to proceed in their voyages, which otherwise as we well perceive, cannot be performed in the rest of the year following: Therefore we of our especial grace, certain knowledge and mere motion, for us, our heirs and successors, do grant, to and with the said Governor and Company of Merchants of London trading into the East Indies, and their successors, that, in any time of restraint, six good ships and six good pinnaces, well furnished with ordnance, and other munition for their defence, and five hundred mariners, Englishmen, to guide and sail in the same six ships and six pinnaces, at all times, during the said term of fifteen years, shall quietly be permitted and suffered to depart, and go in the said voyages, according to the purport of these presents, without any stay or contradiction by us, our heirs or successors, or by our lord high admiral, or any other officer or subject of us, our heirs or successors for the time being, in anywise, any restraint, law, statute, usage or matter whatsoever, to the contrary notwithstanding. Provided nevertheless, that if we shall, at any time within the said term of fifteen years, have just cause to arm our navy in warlike manner, in defence of our realm, or for offence of our enemies, or that it shall be found needful to join to the navy of us, our heirs or successors, the ships of our subjects, to be also armed for the wars, to such a number as cannot be supplied, if the said six ships and six pinnaces should be permitted to depart, as above is mentioned, then upon knowledge given, by us, our heirs or successors, or by our admiral to the said Governor and Company, about the 20th day of the month of July, or three months before the said Governor and Company shall begin

to make ready the same six ships and six pinnaces, that we may not spare the said six ships and six pinnaces, and the mariners requisite for them to be out of our realm during the time that our navy shall be upon the seas, that then the said Governor and Company shall forbear to send six such ships and six pinnaces, for their trade and merchandize, until that we shall revoke or withdraw our said navy from the said service: And we of our further royal favour, and of our especial grace, certain knowledge and mere motions have granted, and by these presents, for us, our heirs and successors, do grant to the said Governor and Company of Merchants of London, trading into the East Indies, and to their successors that the said East Indies, nor the islands, havens, ports, cities, towns or places thereof nor any part thereof shall not be visited, frequented or haunted by any of the subjects of us, our heirs or successors, during the same term of fifteen years, contrary to the true meaning of these presents : And by virtue of our prerogative royal, which we will not in that behalf have argued, or brought in question we straightly charge, command and prohibit, for us, our heirs and successors, all the subjects of us, our heirs and successors, of what degree or quality so ever they be, that none of them, directly or indirectly do visit, haunt, frequent or trade, traffick or adventure, by way of merchandize into or from any of the said East Indies, or into or from any the islands, ports, havens, cities towns or places aforesaid, other than the said Governor and Company of Merchants of London, trading into the East Indies, and such particular persons as now be, or hereafter shall be of that Company, their agents, factors and assigns during the said term of fifteen years, unless it be by and with such license and agreement of the said Governor and Company of Merchants of London, trading into the East Indies, in writing first had and obtained, under their common seal to be granted, upon pain that every such person or persons that shall trade or traffick into or from any of the said East Indies, other than the said Governor and Company of Merchants of London, trading into the East Indies, and their successors, shall incur our indignation, and the forfeiture and loss of the goods, merchandizes, and other things whatever, which so shall be brought into this realm of England, or any the dominions of the same, contrary to our said prohibition, or the purport or true meaning of these presents, as also the ship and ships with the furniture thereof, wherein such goods merchandizes, or things shall be brought; the one half of all the said forfeitures to be to us, our heirs and successors, and the other half of all and every the said forfeitures, we do, by these presents, of our especial grace, certain knowledge and mere motion, clearly and wholly for us, our heirs and successors, give, grant unto the said Governor and Company of Merchants of London, trading into the East Indies: And further all and every the said offenders, for their said contempt, to suffer imprisonment during our pleasure, and such punishment, as to us, our heirs or successors, for so high contempt, shall seem meet and convenient, and not to be in anywise delivered, until they and every of them shall be bound unto the said Governor for the time being in the sum of £1,000 at the least, at no time then after, during present grant, to sail or traffick, into any of the said East Indies, contrary to our express commandment in that be herein set down and published: And further, for the better encouragement of merchants, strangers or others, to bring in commodities into our realm, we for us, our heirs and successors, do grant unto the said Governor and Company of Merchants of London, trading into the East Indies, they and their successors may, from time to time, for any consideration or benefit, to be taken to their own use, grant or give license, to any the person or persons to sail, trade, traffick into or from any the said East Indies, so as such license be granted or given, before such goods, wares merchandizes be laid on land, and so as such license made by the said Governor and Company of Merchant London, trading into the East Indies, for the time being under their common seal: And further of our especial grace, certain knowledge and mere motion, we have condescended and granted, and by these presents, for us, our heirs and successors, we do condescend grant unto the said Governor and Company of Merchant London, trading into the East Indies, and their successors that we, our heirs and successors, during the said term of fifteen years, will not grant liberty, license or power any person or persons whatsoever, contrary to the tenor of these our letters patents to sail, pass, trade or traffick, to the said East Indies, or into or from the islands, ports, havens, cities, towns or places aforesaid, or any of them contrary to the true meaning of these presents, without consent of the said Governor and Company of Merchants of London, trading into the East Indies, or the most of them: And our will and pleasure is, and hereby we do ordain, that it shall and may be lawful, to and for the Governor and Company of merchants of London; trading into the East Indies, or the more part of them, whereof the governor for the time being, or his deputy, to be one, to admit into and to be of the said Company, all such apprentices to any of the said fellowship or Company, and all such servants and factor, of and for the said Company, and all such other, as to them, or the most part of them, present at any court, held for the said Company, the Governor, or his deputy, being one, shall be thought fit and agreeable, with the orders and ordinances to be made for the government of the said Company. Provided always, that if any of the persons, before named and appointed, by these presents, to be free of the said Company of Merchants of London, trading into the East Indies, shall not before the

going forth of the fleet, appointed for this first voyage, from the port of London, bring in and deliver to the treasurer or treasurers appointed, or which, within the space of twenty days next after the date hereof, shall be appointed, by the said Governor and Company, or the more part of them, to receive the contributions and adventures, set down by the several adventurers, in this last and present voyage, now in hand, to be set forth, such sums of money as have been, by any of the said persons, by these presents nominated to be of the said Company, expressed, set down and written in a book for that purpose, and left in the hands of the said Thomas Smith, Governor of the said Company, or of the said Paul Banning, Alderman of London, and subscribed with the names of the same adventurers, under their hands, and agreed upon to be adventured in the said first voyage, that then, it shall be lawful for the said Governor and Company, or the more part of them whereof the said Governor or his deputy, to be one, at any their general court, or general assembly, to remove, disfranchise and displace him or them at their wills and pleasures. And the said Governor and Company, of Merchants of London, trading into the East Indies, for them and their successors, do, by these presents, covenant, promise and grant, to and with us, our heirs and successors, that they the said Governor and Company, and their successors, in all and every such voyage, as they at any time or times hereafter, during the said term, shall make out of this realm, by virtue of this our grant and letters patents the first voyage only excepted shall and will, upon every return which shall be made back again into this realm, or any of our dominions, or within six months next after every such return, bring into this our realm of England, from the said East Indies, or from some other parts, beyond the seas, out of our dominions great or greater value in bullion of gold or silver, or of foreign coin of gold or silver, respectively, for every voyage, the first voyage only excepted, as shall be by force of these presents transported and carried out of this realm, by them or any of them, in any kind of silver abovesaid whatsoever any of the said voyages; and that all such silver, as by virtue of this our grant and letters patents, shall be shipped laden by the said Governor and Company or their success to be transported out of this realm, in any of the said voyages, shall from time to time, at the setting forth of every said particular voyage, be shipped and laden at the ports havens of London, Dartmouth, or Plymouth, or at some of same ports or havens, and at no other port or havens whatsoever, within this our realm, or the dominions thereof; and that all and every such silver, as from time to time shall be shipped and laden in the said ports of London, Dartmouth or Plymouth, or any of them, to be by force of these presents transported out of this realm, as is aforesaid shall, from time to time, be duly entered by the customer, controller, collector or other officer to whom it shall appertain, of every such port or haven, where the same shall happen to be shipped or laden, in the Custom-Book belonging to the said port or haven, before such time as the same shall be shipped or laden, to be transported as is aforesaid, without a custom or subsidy, to be paid for the same; and that in like manner, all and all manner of gold and silver whatsoever which shall be brought into this realm, or any of our dominions, by the said Governor and Company, or any of the according to the true meaning of these presents, shall likewise be, from time to time, duly entered by the custom controller or other officer of every such port, creek or place where the same gold or silver shall happen to be unshipped or brought to land, before such time as the same gold silver or any part thereof, shall be unshipped or brought land, as is aforesaid. Provided always, nevertheless, and our will and pleasure is, that these our letters patents, or anything therein contained, shall not in any sort extend to give or grant any license, power or authority unto the said Governor and Company of Merchants of London, trading into the East Indies, or to any of them to undertake or address any trade unto any country, port, island, haven, city, creek, town, or place, being already in the lawful and actual possession of any such Christian prince or state, as at this present is, or at any time hereafter shall be in league or amity, with us, our heirs or successors, and which doth not, or will not accept of such trade, but doth overtly declare and publish the same, to be utterly against his or their good-will and liking, any thing before in these presents contained, to the contrary thereof notwithstanding. Provided also, that if it shall, hereafter appear to us, our heirs or successors, that this grant or the continuance thereof, in the whole or in any part thereof, shall not be profitable to us, our heirs and successors, or to this our realm, that then, and from thenceforth, upon and after two years' warning, to be given to the said Company, by us, our heirs or successors, under our or their privy seal, or sign manual, this present grant shall cease, be void and determined, to all intents, constructions and purposes: And further of our especial grace, certain knowledge and mere motion we have condescended and granted, and by these presents for us, our heirs and successors, do condescend and grant to the said Governor and Company of Merchants of London, trading into the East Indies, and their successors that if at the end of the said term of fifteen years, it shall seem meet and convenient unto the said Governor and Company, or any the parties aforesaid, that this present grant shall be continued, and if that also it shall appear unto us, our heirs and successors, that the continuance thereof shall not prejudicial or hurtful to this our realm, but that we shall find the further continuance thereof profitable for us, our heirs and successors and for our

realm, with such conditions as are herein mentioned, or with some alteration or qualification thereof, that then we, our heirs or successors, at the instance and humble petition of the said Governor and Company, or any of them; to be made unto us, our heirs and successors, will grant and make unto the said Governor and Company, or any of them, so suing for the same; and such then person and persons, our subjects, as they shall nominate and appoint, or shall be by us, our heirs or successors, newly nominated, not exceeding in number twenty-four, new letters patents, under the great seal of England, in due form of law, with the like covenants, grants, clauses and articles, as in these presents are contained, or with addition of other necessary articles, or changing of these into some other parts, for and during the full term of fifteen years, the next following; willing hereby and straightly charging and commanding all and singular our admirals, vice-admirals, justices, mayors, sheriffs, escheators, constables, bailiffs, and all and singular other our officers, ministers, liege and subjects whatsoever, to be aiding, favouring, helping assisting unto the said Governor and Company, and to their successors, and to their deputies, officers, factors, servants, assigns and ministers and every of them, in executing enjoying the premises, as well on land as on sea, from time to time, when you or any of you shall thereunto be required any statute, act, ordinance, proviso, proclamation or, restraint, heretofore had, made, set forth, ordained, or provided, or any other matter, cause or thing whatsoever the contrary in any way notwithstanding; although express mention of the true yearly value or certainty of premises, or of any of them, or of any other gifts or grants by us, or any of our progenitors, to the said Governor and Company of Merchants of London, trading into the East Indies, or to any of them, before this time made, in these presents is not made, or any statute, act, ordinance, provision, proclamation or restraint, to the contrary her fore had made, ordained or provided, or any other cause or matter whatsoever, in anywise notwithstanding witness whereof, we have caused these our letters be made patents: Witness ourself, at Westminster, the thirty-first day of December, in three and fortieth year of our reign.

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