Translation of First Charter, granted to the President, Council, and Fellows of the Royal Society of London, by King Charles the Second, A.D. 1662.

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 present Letters shall come, greeting.

We have long and fully resolved with Ourself to extend not only the boundaries of the Empire, but also the very arts and sciences. Therefore we look with favour upon all forms of learning, but with particular grace we encourage philosophical studies, especially those which by actual experiments attempt either to shape out a new philosophy or to perfect the old. In order, therefore, that such studies, which have not hitherto been sufficiently brilliant in any part of the world, may shine conspicuously amongst our people, and that at length the whole world of letters may always recognize us not only as the Defender of the Faith, but also as the universal lover and patron of every kind of truth:

Know ye that we, of our special grace and of our certain knowledge and mere motion, have ordained, established, granted, and declared, and by these presents for us, our heirs, and successors do ordain, establish, grant, and declare, that from henceforth for ever there shall be a Society, consisting of a President, Council, and Fellows, which shall be called and named The Royal Society; And for us, our heirs, and successors we do make, ordain, create, and constitute by these presents the same Society, by the name of The President, Council, and Fellows of the Royal Society, one body corporate and politic in fact, deed, and name, really and fully, and that by the same name they may have perpetual succession; and that they and their successors (whose studies are to be applied to further promoting by the authority of experiments the sciences of natural things and of useful arts), by the same name of The President, Council, and
Fellows of the Royal Society aforesaid, may and shall be in all future times persons able and capable in law to have, acquire, receive, and possess lands and tenements, meadows, feedings, pastures, liberties, privileges, franchises, jurisdictions, and hereditaments whatsoever, to themselves and their successors in fee and perpetuity, or for term of life, lives, or years, or otherwise in whatsoever manner, and also goods and chattels, and all other things, of whatsoever kind, nature, sort, or quality they may be; and also to give, grant, demise, and assign the same lands, tenements, and hereditaments, goods and chattels, and to do and execute all acts and things necessary of and concerning the same, by the name aforesaid; And that by the name of The President, Council, and Fellows of the Royal Society aforesaid they may henceforth for ever be able and have power to plead and be impleaded, to answer and be answered, to defend and be defended, in whatsoever Courts and places, and before whatsoever Judges and Justices and other persons and officers of us, our heirs, and successors, in all and singular actions, pleas, suits, plaints, causes, matters, things, and demands whatsoever, of whatsoever kind, nature, or sort they may or shall be, in the same manner and form as any of our lieges within this our Realm of England, being persons able and capable in law, or as any body corporate or politic within this our Realm of England, may be able and have power to have, acquire, receive, possess, give, and grant, to plead and be impleaded, to answer and be answered, to defend or be defended; And that the same President, Council, and Fellows of the Royal Society aforesaid, and their successors, may have for ever a Common Seal, to serve for transacting the causes and affairs whatsoever of them and their successors; and that it may and shall be good and lawful to the same President, Council, and Fellows of the Royal Society aforesaid, and to their successors for the time being, to break, change, and make anew that Seal from time to time, according as it shall seem most expedient to them.

And that our royal intention may obtain the better effect, and for the good rule and government of the aforesaid Royal Society from time to time, we will, and by these presents for us, our heirs, and successors do grant to the same President, Council, and Fellows of the Royal Society aforesaid, and to their successors, that henceforth for ever the Council aforesaid shall be and consist of twenty-one persons (of whom we will the President to be always one); And that all and singular other persons who within one month next following after the date of these presents shall be received and admitted by the President and Council, and in all time following by the President, Council, and Fellows; The Council to consist of twenty-one (of whom the President to be always one).

The Fellows to be chosen in the first month, by the Presi-
dent and Council; after that month, by the President, Council, and Fellows.

into the same Society, as Members of the Royal Society aforesaid, and shall have been noted in the Register by them to be kept, shall be and shall be called and named Fellows of the Royal Society aforesaid: whom, the more eminently they are distinguished for the study of every kind of learning and good letters, the more ardently they desire to promote the honour, studies, and advantage of this Society, the more they are noted for integrity of life, uprightness of character, and piety, and excel in fidelity and affection of mind towards us, our Crown, and dignity, the more we wish them to be especially deemed fitting and worthy of being admitted into the number of the Fellows of the same Society.

And for the better execution of our will and grant in this behalf, we have assigned, nominated, constituted, and made, and by these presents for us, our heirs, and successors do assign, nominate, constitute, and make, our very well-beloved and trusty William, Viscount Brouncker, Chancellor to our very dear consort, Queen Catherine, to be and become the first and present President of the Royal Society aforesaid; willing that the aforesaid William, Viscount Brouncker, shall continue in the office of President of the Royal Society aforesaid from the date of these presents until the feast of St Andrew next following after the date of these presents, and until one other of the Council of the Royal Society aforesaid for the time being shall have been elected, appointed, and sworn to that office in due manner, according to the ordinance and provision below in these presents expressed and declared (if the aforesaid William, Viscount Brouncker, shall live so long); having first taken a corporal oath well and faithfully to execute his office in and by all things touching that office, according to the true intention of these presents, before our very well-beloved and very trusty Cousin and Councillor Edward, Earl of Clarendon, our Chancellor of England: to which same Edward, Earl of Clarendon, our Chancellor aforesaid, we give and grant full power and authority, to administer the oath aforesaid in these words following, that is to say:

The President’s Oath.

I, William, Viscount Brouncker, do promise to deal faithfully and honestly in all things belonging to the trust committed to me as President of this Royal Society, during my employment in that capacity. So help me God!

We have also assigned, constituted, and made, and by these presents for us, our heirs, and successors do make, our beloved and trusty Robert Moray, Knight, one of our Privy Council in our Realm of Scotland; Robert Boyle, Esquire; William
Brereton, Esquire, eldest son of the Baron de Brereton; Kenelm
Digby, Knight, Chancellor to our very dear mother, Queen
Maria; Paul Neile, Knight, one of the Gentlemen of our Privy
Chamber; Henry Slingesby, Esquire, another of the Gentlemen
of our aforesaid Privy Chamber; William Petty, Knight;
John Wallis, Doctor in Divinity; Timothy Clarke, Doctor in
Medicine and one of our Physicians; John Wilkins, Doctor in
Divinity; George Ent, Doctor in Medicine; William Aerskine,
one of our Cup-bearers; Jonathan Goddard, Doctor in Medi-
cine and Professor of Gresham College; Christopher Wren,
Doctor in Medicine, Saville Professor of Astronomy in our
University of Oxford; William Balle, Esquire; Matthew
Wren, Esquire; John Evelyn, Esquire; Thomas Henshawe,
Esquire; Dudley Palmer, of Grey’s Inn, in our County of
Middlesex, Esquire; and Henry Oldenburg, Esquire, together
with the President aforesaid, to be and become the first and
present twenty-one of the Council of the Royal Society afores-
said; to be continued in the same offices from the date of these
presents until the aforesaid feast of Saint Andrew the Apostle
next following, and thenceforth until other fitting and able and
sufficient persons shall have been elected, appointed, and sworn
into the offices aforesaid (if they shall live so long, or shall not
have been amoved for any just and reasonable cause); first
taking corporal oaths before the President of the aforesaid
Royal Society, well and faithfully to execute their offices in and
by all things touching those offices, according to the form and
effect of the aforesaid oath, mutatis mutandis, to be administered
to the President of the Royal Society aforesaid by our Chancellor
of England; (to which same President for the time being, for
us, our heirs, and successors, we give and grant by these presents
full power and authority to administer the oaths aforesaid;) And
that the same persons, so as it is aforesaid elected, appointed,
and sworn, and hereafter to be elected, appointed, and sworn
from time to time, to the Council of the aforesaid Royal Society,
shall be and become aiding, counselling, and assistant in all
matters, business, and affairs touching or concerning the better
regulation, government, and direction of the aforesaid Royal
Society, and of every Member of the same.

And further we will, and by these presents for us, our heirs,
and successors do grant to the aforesaid President, Council, and
Fellows of the Royal Society aforesaid, and to their successors,
that the President, Council, and Fellows of the Royal Society
aforesaid for the time being (of whom we will the President for
the time being to be one) may and shall have from time to time
to continue as above, unless amoved for just cause;

but first to take, before the President, the like oath as his,
mutatis mutandis.

The President, Council, and Fellows (of whom the President
to be one), to elect, annually, on St Andrew’s Day, one
out of the Council to be President: who is to hold, if not dead
nor amoved, till the
in all future times for ever power and authority to nominate and elect, and that they may be able and have power to elect and nominate, every year, on the aforesaid feast of St Andrew, one of the Council of the aforesaid Royal Society for the time being, who may and shall be President of the Royal Society aforesaid until the feast of St Andrew the Apostle thereafter next following (if he shall live so long, or shall not be amoved meanwhile for any just and reasonable cause), and thenceforth until another shall have been elected, appointed, and nominated to the office of President of the Royal Society aforesaid; and that he, after that he shall so have been elected and nominated, as it is aforesaid, to the office of President of the Royal Society aforesaid, before he be admitted to that office, shall take a corporal oath before the Council of the same Royal Society, or any seven or more of them, rightly, well, and faithfully to execute that office in all things touching that office, according to the form and effect of the aforesaid oath, mutatis mutandis (to which same Council, or to any seven or more of them, we give and grant and by these presents for us, our heirs, and successors, full power and authority to administer the aforesaid oath from time to time, as often as it shall be necessary); and that after having so taken such oath, as it is aforesaid, he may be able and have power to execute the office of President of the Royal Society aforesaid until the feast of St Andrew the Apostle thereafter next following; And if it shall happen that the President of the Royal Society aforesaid for the time being, at any time, so long as he shall be in the office of President of the same Royal Society, shall die or be amoved from his office, that then and so often it may and shall be good and lawful to the Council and Fellows of the aforesaid Royal Society, or to any seven or more of them (of whom we will the President of the Council aforesaid to be always one at such an election), to elect and appoint another of the aforesaid number of the Council aforesaid as President of the Royal Society aforesaid; and that he so elected and appointed may have and exercise that office during the residue of the same year, and until another shall have been in due manner elected and sworn to that office, first taking a corporal oath in the form last specified; and so as often as the case shall so happen.

And further we will, that whenever it shall happen that any one or any of the Council of the Royal Society aforesaid for the time being shall die, or be amoved from that office, or retire (which same [members] of the Council of the Royal Society would be)

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If any of the Council die, or be amoved, or retire (and power of amotion is hereby given to the President and Council or major part of them, whereas

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1 So in the original; see p. 219.
aforesaid, and every one of them, we will to be amovable for misbehaviour or any other reasonable cause, at the good pleasure of the President and of the rest of the Council aforesaid surviving and remaining in that office, or of the major part of the same, of whom we will the President for the time being to be one), that then and so often it may and shall be good and lawful to the aforesaid President, Council, and Fellows of the Royal Society aforesaid, or to the major part of the same (of whom we will the President of the Royal Society aforesaid for the time being to be one), to nominate, elect, and appoint one other or several others of the Fellows of the Royal Society aforesaid, in the place or places of him or them so dead, retired, or amoved, to fill up the aforesaid number of twenty-one persons of the Council of the Royal Society aforesaid; and that he or they so elected and appointed in that office may have the same office until the feast of St Andrew the Apostle then next following, and thenceforth until one other or several others shall have been elected, appointed, and nominated; first taking a corporal oath before the President and Council of the Royal Society aforesaid, or any seven or more of them for the time being, well and faithfully to execute that office in and by all things touching that office, according to the true intention of these presents.

And further we will, and by these presents for us, our heirs, and successors do grant to the aforesaid President, Council, and Fellows of the aforesaid Royal Society, and to their successors, that they and their successors, every year, on the aforesaid feast of St Andrew the Apostle, may and shall have full power and authority to elect, nominate, appoint, and change ten of the Fellows of the Royal Society aforesaid, to fill up the places and offices of ten of the aforesaid number of twenty-one of the Council of the Royal Society aforesaid; for we do declare it to be our royal pleasure, and by these presents for us, our heirs, and successors we do grant, that ten of the aforesaid Council, and no more, shall be annually changed and amoved by the President, Council, and Fellows of the Royal Society aforesaid.

We will also, and for us, our heirs, and successors do grant to the aforesaid President, Council, and Fellows of the aforesaid Royal Society, and to their successors, that if it shall happen that the President of the same Royal Society for the time being is detained by sickness or infirmity, or is employed in the service of us, our heirs, or successors, or is otherwise occupied, so that he shall not be able to attend to the necessary affairs of the same Royal Society touching the office of President, that then and so
often it may and shall be good and lawful to the same President so detainted, employed, or occupied, to nominate and appoint one of the Council of the aforesaid Royal Society for the time being to be and become the Deputy of the same President; which same Deputy, so to be made and appointed in the office of Deputy of the President aforesaid, may and shall be the Deputy of the same President from time to time, as often as the aforesaid President shall happen to be so absent, during the whole time in which the aforesaid President shall continue in the office of President; unless in the meanwhile the aforesaid President of the Royal Society aforesaid for the time being shall have made and appointed one other of the aforesaid Council his Deputy; And that every such Deputy of the aforesaid President so to be made and appointed, as it is aforesaid, may be able and have power to do and execute all and singular things which pertain or ought to pertain to the office of President of the aforesaid Royal Society, or which are limited and appointed to be done and executed by the aforesaid President, by virtue of these our Letters Patent, from time to time, as often as the aforesaid President shall so happen to be absent, during such time as he shall continue the Deputy of the aforesaid President, by force of these our Letters Patent, as fully, freely, and wholly, and in as ample manner and form, as the aforesaid President, if he were present, would be able and have power and do and execute those things; a corporal oath first to be taken by such Deputy upon the holy Gospels of God, in the form and effect last specified, well and faithfully to execute all and singular things which pertain to the office of President, before the aforesaid Council of the aforesaid Royal Society, or any seven or more of them; and so as often as the case shall so happen: to which same Council, or to any seven or more of them, for the time being, we do give and grant by these presents power and authority to administer the oath aforesaid as often as the case shall so happen, without procuring or obtaining any writ, commission, or further warrant in that behalf from us, our heirs or successors.

And further we will, and by these presents for us, our heirs, and successors do grant to the aforesaid President, Council, and Fellows of the Royal Society aforesaid, and to their successors, that they and their successors henceforth for ever may and shall have one Treasurer, two Secretaries, one Clerk, and two Serjeants-at-Mace, who may from time to time attend upon the President; and that the aforesaid Treasurer, Secretaries, Clerk, and Serjeants-at-Mace, to be elected and nominated,
before they be admitted to execute their several and respective offices, shall take their corporal oaths in the form and effect last specified, before the President and Council of the same Royal Society, or any seven or more of them, rightly, well, and faithfully to execute their several and respective offices in all things touching the same; and that after having so taken such oaths, as it is aforesaid, they may exercise and use their respective offices; to which same President and Council, or to any seven or more of them, we do give and grant by these presents full power and authority to administer the oaths aforesaid from time to time to the aforesaid several and respective officers and their successors: And we have assigned, nominated, chosen, created, appointed, and made, and by these presents for us, our heirs, and successors do assign, nominate, choose, create, appoint, and make, our beloved subjects William Balle, Esquire, to be and become the first and present Treasurer, and the aforesaid John Wilkins and Henry Oldenburg to be and become the first and present Secretaries, of the aforesaid Royal Society; to be continued in the same offices until the aforesaid feast of St Andrew the Apostle next following after the date of these presents: And that from time to time and at all times on the aforesaid feast of Saint Andrew the Apostle (unless it shall be Sunday, and if it be Sunday, then on the day next following) the President, Council, and Fellows of the aforesaid Royal Society for the time being, or the major part of the same (of whom we will the President for the time being to be one), may be able and have power to elect, nominate, and appoint other upright and discreet men, from time to time, as Treasurer, Secretaries, Clerk, and Sergeants-at-Mace of the aforesaid Royal Society; and that those who shall so have been elected, appointed, and sworn to the aforesaid several and respective offices, as it is aforesaid, may be able and have power to exercise and enjoy those respective offices until the aforesaid feast of St Andrew then next following, their aforesaid oaths, as it is aforesaid, first to be taken; and so as often as the case shall so happen: And if it shall happen that any one or any of the officers aforesaid of the same Royal Society shall die, or be amovsed from their respective offices, that then and so often it may and shall be good and lawful to the President, Council, and Fellows of the aforesaid Royal Society, or to the major part of the same (of whom we will the President for the time being to be one), to elect and appoint another or others to the office or offices of those persons so deceased or amovsed; and that he or they so elected and appointed may have and exercise who are all to be sworn before the President and Council, or any seven or more of them.

William Balle appointed Treasurer, John Wilkins and Henry Oldenburg Secretaries.

And on every St Andrew's Day yearly (unless it be Sunday), the President, Council, and Fellows, or the major part of them (of whom the President to be one), are to elect others in the Offices of Treasurer, Secretaries, Clerk, and Sergeants-at-Mace: who, after being sworn, are to officiate till the next St Andrew's Day.

And if any of them die or be amovsed, the like election to be made of others to supply their places, for the residue of the year, and till others shall be duly elected and sworn.
the respective offices aforesaid during the residue of the same year, and until another or others shall have been in due manner elected and sworn to those respective offices; and so as often as the case shall so happen.

And moreover we will, and of our special grace and of our certain knowledge and mere motion do grant to the aforesaid President, Council, and Fellows of the Royal Society aforesaid, and to their successors, that the President and Council of the aforesaid Royal Society for the time being, and the major part of the same (of whom we will the President for the time being to be one), may be able and have power to meet together and assemble in a College or other public place or Hall within our City of London, or in any other convenient place within ten miles of our same City; and that they so met together and assembled shall and may have full authority, power, and faculty from time to time to draw up, constitute, ordain, make, and establish such laws, statutes, acts, ordinances, and constitutions as shall seem to them, or to the major part of them, to be good, wholesome, useful, honourable, and necessary, according to their sound discretions, and to do and perform all other things whatsoever belonging to the affairs and matters of the Royal Society aforesaid; all and singular which laws, statutes, acts, ordinances, and constitutions so to be made as it is aforesaid, we will, and by these presents for us, our heirs, and successors, firmly enjoining, do order and command, that they shall be inviolably observed from time to time, according to the tenor and effect of the same: so nevertheless that the aforesaid laws, statutes, acts, ordinances, and constitutions so to be made as it is aforesaid, and every one of them, be reasonable, and not repugnant or contrary to the laws, customs, acts, or statutes of this our Realm of England.

And further, of our more ample special grace and of our certain knowledge and mere motion, we have given and granted, and by these presents for us, our heirs, and successors do give and grant to the aforesaid Council and Fellows of the aforesaid Royal Society, and to their successors, full power and authority from time to time, to elect, nominate, and appoint one or more Typographers or Printers, and Chalcographers or Engravers, and to grant to him or them, by a writing, sealed with the Common Seal of the aforesaid Royal Society, and signed by the hand of the President for the time being, faculty to print such things, matters, and affairs touching or concerning the aforesaid [Royal] Society, as shall have been committed to the aforesaid Typographer or Printer, Chalcographer or Engraver, or Typographers or Printers, Chalcographers or Engravers, from time to time, by the President and
Council of the aforesaid Royal Society, or any seven or more of them (of whom we will the President for the time being to be one); their corporal oaths first to be taken, before they be admitted to exercise their offices, before the President and Council for the time being, or any seven or more of them, in the form and effect last specified; to which same President and Council, or to any seven or more of them, we do give and grant by these presents full power and authority to administer the oaths aforesaid.

And further, in order that the aforesaid President, Council, and Fellows of the aforesaid Royal Society may obtain the better effect in their philosophical studies, of our more ample special grace and of our certain knowledge and mere motion, we have given and granted, and by these presents for us, our heirs, and successors, do give and grant, to the aforesaid President, Council, and Fellows of the aforesaid Royal Society, and to their successors, that they and their successors from time to time may and shall have full power and authority from time to time, and at such seasonable times, according to their discretion, to require, take, and receive the bodies of such persons as have suffered death by the hand of the executioner, and to anatomize them, in such ample form and manner, and to all intents and purposes, as the College of Physicians and the Corporation of Surgeons of our City of London have used or enjoyed, or may be able and have power to use or enjoy, the same bodies.

And further, for the improvement of the experiments, arts, and sciences of the aforesaid Royal Society, of our more abundant special grace and of our certain knowledge and mere motion, we have given and granted, and by these presents for us, our heirs, and successors do give and grant, to the aforesaid President, Council, and Fellows of the aforesaid Royal Society, and to their successors, that they and their successors from time to time may and shall have full power and authority, by letters or epistles under the hand of the aforesaid President, in the presence of the Council, or of any seven or more of them, and in the name of the Royal Society, and sealed with their Common Seal aforesaid, to enjoy mutual intelligence and knowledge with all and all manner of strangers and foreigners, whether private or collegiate, corporate or politic, without any molestation, interruption, or disturbance whatsoever: Provided nevertheless, that this our indulgence, so granted as it is aforesaid, be not extended to further use than the particular benefit and interest of the aforesaid Royal Society in matters or things philosophical, mathematical, or mechanical.

And further we have given and granted, and by these presents

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1 So in the original.
London, or within ten miles of London.

If any abuses or differences arise, they shall be reformed and settled by the Lord Chancellor Clarendon alone, while living; afterwards by the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Lord Chancellor, or Keeper, the Lord Treasurer, the Bishop of London, the Lord Privy Seal, and the two Secretaries of State for the time being, or four or more of them.

for us, our heirs, and successors do give and grant to the aforesaid President, Council, and Fellows of the Royal Society aforesaid, and to their successors, full power and authority to erect, build, and construct, or to make or cause to be erected, built, and constructed, within our City of London, or ten miles of the same, one or more College or Colleges, of whatsoever kind or quality, for the habitation, assembly, and meeting of the aforesaid President, Council, and Fellows of the aforesaid Royal Society, and of their successors, for the ordering and arranging of their affairs and other matters concerning the same Royal Society.

And further we will, and by these presents for us, our heirs, and successors do ordain, constitute, and appoint, that if any abuses or differences hereafter shall arise and happen concerning the government or other matters or affairs of the aforesaid Royal Society, whereby any injury or hindrance may be done to the constitution, stability, and progress of the studies, or to the matters and affairs, of the same; that then and so often, by these presents, for us, our heirs, and successors, we do authorize, [ordain], nominate, assign, and appoint our aforesaid very well-beloved and very trusty Cousin and Councillor Edward, Earl of Clarendon, our Chancellor of our Realm of England, by himself during his life, and, after his death, then the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Chancellor or Keeper of the Great Seal of England, the Treasurer of England, the Bishop of London, the Keeper of the Privy Seal, and the two Principal Secretaries for the time being, or any four or more of them, to reconcile, compose, and adjust the same differences and abuses.

And further we will, and by these presents, for us, our heirs, and successors, firmly enjoining, do order and command all and singular the Justices, Mayors, Aldermen, Sheriffs, Bailiffs, Constables, and other officers, ministers, and subjects whomsoever of us, our heirs, and successors, that they be from time to time aiding and assistant to the aforesaid President, Council, and Fellows of the Royal Society aforesaid, and to their successors, in and by all things, according to the true intention of these our Letters Patent.

Although express mention of the true yearly value or of the certainty of the premises, or of any of them, or of other gifts or grants before these times made by us or by any of our progenitors or predecessors to the aforesaid President, Council, and Fellows of the Royal Society, is not made in these presents; or any statute, act, ordinance, provision, proclamation, or restriction to the contrary thereof heretofore had, made, enacted, ordained, or provided, or any other thing, cause, or matter whatsoever, in any wise notwithstanding.
In witness whereof we have caused these our Letters to be made Patent. Witness Ourself, at Westminster, the fifteenth day of July, in the fourteenth year of our reign.

By the King himself.

Howard.