

CHARTER TO SIR WALTER RALEIGH—1584 * a

ELIZABETH by the Grace of God of England, Fraunce and Ireland Queene, defender of the faith, &c. To all people to whome these presents shall come, greeting.

Knowe yee that of our especial grace, certaine science, and meere motion, we haue given and graunted, and by these presents for us, our heires and successors, we giue and graunt to our trustie and welbeloued seruant *Walter Raleigh*, Esquire, and to his heires assignes for euer, free libertie and licence from time to time, and at all times for euer hereafter, to discouer, search, finde out, and view such remote, heathen and barbarous lands, countries, and territories, not actually possessed of any Christian Prince, nor inhabited by Christian People, as to him, his heires and assignes, and to euery or any of them shall seeme good, and the same to haue, holde, occupie and enjoy to him, his heires and assignes for euer, with all prerogatiues, commodities, jurisdictions, royalties, priuileges, franchises, and preheminences, thereto or thereabouts both by sea and land, whatsoever we by our letters patents may graunt, and as we or any of our noble progenitors haue heretofore graunted to any person or persons, bodies politique or corporate: and the said *Walter Raleigh*, his heires and assignes, and all such as from time to time, by licence of us, our heires and successors, shall goe or trauaile thither to inhabite or remaine, there to build and fortifie, at the discretion of the said *Walter Raleigh*, his heires and assignes, the statutes or acte of Parliament made against fugitiues, or against such as shall depart, remaine or continue out of our Realme of England without licence, or any other statute, acte, lawe, or any ordinance whatsoever to the contrary in anywise notwithstanding.

And we do likewise by these presents, of our especial grace, meere motion, and certain knowledge, for us, our heires and successors, giue and graunt full authoritie, libertie and power to the said *Walter Raleigh*, his heires and assignes, and euery of them, that he and they, and euery or any of them, shall and may at all and euery time, and times hereafter, haue, take, and leade in the saide voyage, and trauaile thitherward, or to inhabit there with him, or them, and euery or any of them, such and so many of our subjects as shall willingly accompanie him or them, and euery or any of them to whom also we doe by these presents, giue full libertie and authority in that behalfe, and also to haue, take, and employ, and vse sufficient shipping and furniture for the Transportations and Nauigations in that behalfe, so that none of the same persons or any of them, be such as hereafter shall be restrained by us, our heires, or successors.

* Massachusetts Historical Society, *Collections*, Third Series, VIII, 117. Hakluyt Society *Publications*, 1849.

^a This charter constitutes the first step in the work of English colonization in America. Five voyages were made under it, but without success in establishing a permanent settlement.

And further that the said *Walter Raleigh*, his heires and assignes, and euery of them, shall haue holde, occupie, and enioye to him, his heires and assignes, and euery of them for euer, all the soile of all such lands, territories, and Countreys, so to bee discouered and possessed as aforesaide, and of all such Cities, castles, townes, villages, and places in the same, with the right, royalties, franchises, and iurisdictions, as well marine as other within the saide landes, or Countreys, or the seas thereunto adioyning, to be had, or used, with full power to dispose thereof, and of euery part in fee-simple or otherwise, according to the order of the lawes of England, as neere as the same conueniently may bee, at his, and their will and pleasure, to any persons then being, or that shall remaine within the allegiance of us, our heires, and successors: reseruing always to us our heires, and successors, for all seruices, duties, and demaundes, the fift part of all the oare of golde and siluer, that from time to time, and at all times after such discouerie, subduing and possessing, shal be there gotten and obtained: All which landes, Countreys, and territories, shall for euer be holden of the said *Walter Raleigh*, his heires and assignes, of us, our heirs and successors, by homage, and by the said paiement of the said fift part, reserued onely for all seruices.

And moreouer, we doe by these presents, for us, our heires and successors, giue and graunt licence to the said *Walter Raleigh*, his heirs, and assignes, and euery of them, that he, and they, and euery or any of them, shall and may from time to time, and at all times for euer hereafter, for his and their defence, encounter and expulse, repell and resist as well by sea as by lande, and by all other wayes whatsoever, all, and every such person and persons whatsoever, as without the especial liking and licence of the saide *Walter Raleigh*, and of his heires and assignes, shall attempt to inhabite within the said Countreys, or any of them, or within the space of two hundreth leagues neere to the place or places within such Countreys as aforesaide (if they shall not bee before planted or inhabited within the limits as aforesaide with the subjects of any Christian Prince being in amitie with us) where the saide *Walter Raleigh*, his heires, or assignes, or any of them, or his, or their or any of their associates or company, shall within sixe yeeres (next ensuing) make their dwellings or abidings, or that shall enterprise or attempt at any time hereafter unlawfully to annoy, either by sea or lande, the saide *Walter Raleigh*, his heirs or assignes, or any of them, or his or their, or any of his or their companies: giuing, and graunting by these presents further power and authoritie, to the said *Walter Raleigh*, his heirs and assignes, and euery of them from time to time, and at all times for euer hereafter, to take and surprise by all maner of meanes whatsoever, all and euery those person or persons, with their shippes, vessels, and other goods and furniture, which without the licence of the saide *Walter Raleigh*, or his heires, or assignes, as aforesaide, shalbe founde trafiquing into any harbour, or harbors, creeke, or creekes, within the limits aforesaide, (the subjects of our Realms and Dominions, and all other persons in amitie with us, trading to the *Newfound lands* for fishing as heretofore they haue commonly used, or being driuen by force of a tempest, or shipwracke onely excepted:) and those persons, and euery of them, with their shippes, vessels, goods and furniture to deteine and possesse as of good and lawfull prize, according to the discretion of him the saide

Walter Raleigh, his heires, and assignes, and euery, or any of them. And for vniting in more perfect league and amitie, of such Countreys, landes, and territories so to bee possessed and inhabited as aforesaide with our Realmes of Englande, and Ireland, and the better incouragement of men to these enterprises; we do by these presents, graunt and declare that all such Countreys, so hereafter to be possessed and inhabited as is aforesaide, from thencefoorth shall bee of the allegiance of vs, our heires and successours. And wee doe graunt to the saide *Walter Raleigh*, his heires, and assignes, and to all, and euery of them, and to all and euery other person, and persons being of our allegiance, whose names shall be noted or entred in some of our Courtes of recorde within our Realme of Englande, that with the assent of the saide *Walter Raleigh*, his heires or assignes, shall in his iourneis for discoverie, or in the iourneis for conquest, hereafter trauele to such lands, countreys and territories, as aforesaide, and to their, and to euery of their heires, that they, and euery or any of them, being either borne within our saide Realmes of Englande, or Irelande, or in any other place within our allegiance, and which hereafter shall be inhabiting within any the lands, Countreys, and territories, with such licence (as aforesaide) shall and may haue all the priuiledges of free Denizens, and persons natiue of England, and within our allegiance in such like ample maner and fourme, as if they were borne and personally resident within our saide Realme of England, any lawe, custome, or vsage to the contrary notwithstanding.

And for asmuch as upon the finding out, discovering, or inhabiting of such remote lands, countreys, and territories as aforesaid, it shal be necessary for the safetie of al men, that shal aduenture them selues in those iournies or voyages, to determine to liue together in Christian peace, and ciuil quietnes ech with other, whereby euery one may with more pleasure and profit enioy that whereunto they shall attaine with great paine and perill, we for vs, our heires and successors, are likewise pleased and contented, and by these presents do giue and graunt to the said *Walter Raleigh*, his heires and assignes for ever, that hee and they, and euery or any of them, shall and may from time to time for euer hereafter, within the said mentioned remote landes and Countreys in the way by the seas thither, and from thence, haue full and meere power and authoritie to correct, punish, pardon, gouerne, and rule by their and euery or any of their good discretions and pollicies, as well in causes capital, or criminall, as ciuil, both marine and other, all such our subiects as shall from time to time aduenture themselves in the said iournies or voyages, or that shall at any time hereafter inhabite any such landes, countreys, or territories as aforesaide, or shall abide within 200. leagues of any of the saide place or places, where the saide *Walter Raleigh*, his heires or assignes, or any of them, or any of his or their associates or companies, shall inhabite within 6. yeeres next ensuing the date hereof, according to such statutes, lawes and ordinances, as shall bee by him the saide *Walter Raleigh* his heires and assignes, and euery or any of them deuised, or established, for the better government of the said people as aforesaid. So alwayes as the said statutes, lawes, and ordinances may be as neere as conueniently may be, agreeable to the forme of the lawes, statutes, government, or pollicie of England, and also so as they be not against the true Christian faith, nowe professed in the

Church of England, nor in any wise to withdrawe any of the subiects or people of those landes or places from the allegiance of vs, our heires and successours, as their immediate Soueraigne vnder God.

And further, wee doe by these presents for vs, our heires and successours, giue and graunt full power and authoritie to our trustie and welbeloued counsaile sir *William Cicill* knight, Lorde *Burghley*, our high Treasurer of England, and to the Lorde Treasurer of England, for vs, our heires and successours for the time being, and to the priuie Counsell, of us, our heirs and successours, or any foure or more of them for the time being, that hee, they, or any foure or more of them, shall and may from time to time, and at all times hereafter, vnder his or their handes or seales by vertue of these presents, authorise and licence the saide *Walter Raleigh*, his heires and assignes, and euery or any of them by him, and by themselues, or by their, or any of their sufficient Attornies, deputies, officers, ministers, factors, and seruants, to imbarke and transport out of our Realme of England and Ireland, and the Dominions thereof all, or any of his, or their goods, and all or any the goods of his and their associats and companies, and euery or any of them, with such other necessaries and commodities of any our Realmes, as to the saide Lorde Treasurer, or foure or more of the priuie Counsaile, of vs, our heires and successours for the time being (as aforesaide) shalbe from time to time by his or their wisdomes, or discretions thought meete and conuenient, for the better reliefe and supportation of him the saide *Walter Raleigh*, his heires, and assignes, and euery or any of them, and of his or their or any of their associats and companies, any acte, statute, lawe, or other thing to the contrary in any wise notwithstanding.

Provided alwayes, and our will and pleasure is, and wee do hereby declare to all Christian kings, princes and states, that if the saide *Walter Raleigh*, his heires or assignes, or any of them, or any other by their licence or appointment, shall at any time or times hereafter, robbe or spoile by sea or by lande, or do any acte of unjust or unlawful hostilitie, to any of the subjects of vs, our heires or successours, or to any of the subjects of any the kings, princes, rulers, governors, or estates, being then in perfect league and amitie with us, our heires and successours, and that upon such injury, or upon iust complaint of any such prince, ruler, governour, or estate, or their subiects, wee, our heires and successours, shall make open proclamation within any the portes of our Realme of England, that the saide *Walter Raleigh*, his heires and assignes, and adherents, or any to whome these our letters patents may extende, shall within the termes to be limited, by such proclamation, make full restitution, and satisfaction of all such injuries done, so as both we and the said princes, or other so complaying, may holde vs and themselues fully contented. And that if the saide *Walter Raleigh*, his heires and assignes, shall not make or cause to be made satisfaction accordingly, within such time so to be limited, that then it shall be lawfull to us our heires and successours, to put the saide *Walter Raleigh*, his heires and assignes and adherents, and all the inhabitants of the said places to be discouered (as is aforesaide) or any of them out of our allegiance and protection, and that from and after such time of putting out of protection the saide *Walter Raleigh*, his heires, assignes and adherents, and others so to be put out,

and the said places within their habitation, possession and rule, shall be out of our allegiance and protection, and free for all princes and others, to pursue with hostility, as being not our subjects, nor by vs any way to be auouched, maintained or defended, nor to be holden as any of ours, nor to our protection or dominion, or allegiance any way belonging, for that expresse mention of the cleer yeerely value of the certaintie of the premisses, or any part thereof, or of any other gift, or grant by vs, or any our progenitors, or predecessors to the said *Walter Raleigh*, before this time made in these presents be not expressed, or any other grant, ordinance, prouision, proclamation, or restraint to the contrarye thereof, before this time giuen, ordained, or prouided, or any other thing, cause, or matter whatsoever, in any wise notwithstanding. In witness whereof, we haue caused these our letters to be made patents. Witnesse our selues, at *Westminster*, the 25. day of March, in the sixe and twentieth yeere of our Raigne.