

THE CHARTER OF INCORPORATION

Granted by Henry VIII to the President and College, or Commonalty, of the Faculty of Physic in London

Dated September 23rd, 1518, 10 Hen. VIII

ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF THE CHARTER

HENRY, by the Grace of God, King of England and France, and Lord of Ireland. To ALL to whom these present letters shall come, Greeting. WHEREAS, we consider it the duty of our Royal office by all means to consult the happiness of the people under our rule, we have thought it to be chiefly and before all things necessary to withstand in good time the attempts of the wicked, and to curb the audacity of those wicked men who shall profess medicine more for the sake of their avarice than from the assurance of any good conscience, whereby very many inconveniences may ensue to the rude and credulous populace: Therefore, partly imitating the example of well governed cities in Italy and many other nations, and partly inclining to the petition of the grave men, Doctors John Chamber, Thomas Linacre¹, Fernandez de Victoria², our physicians, Nicholas Halsewell, Giovanni Franceschi, and Robert Yaxley³, physicians, and especially of the most Reverend Father in Christ and Lord, the Lord Thomas, Cardinal priest of the Holy Roman Church of the title of Santa Cecilia beyond the Tiber, Archbishop of York, and our very dear Chancellor of England, we will and command to be instituted a perpetual College of learned and grave men who shall publicly exercise medicine in our City of London and the suburbs, and within seven miles from that City on every side: Whose care it will be, as we hope, both for their own honour and in the name of the public benefit, as well to discourage the unskilfulness and temerity of the knavish men whom we have mentioned, by their own example and gravity, as to punish the same by our laws lately enacted, and by the constitutions to be ordained by the same College: And in order that these things may the more easily be duly performed, we have granted to the aforesaid Doctors John Chamber, Thomas Linacre, Fernandez de Victoria, our physicians, Nicholas Halsewell, Giovanni Franceschi and Robert Yaxley, physicians: That they and all men of the same faculty of and in the City aforesaid shall be in deed and in name one body and perpetual Commonalty or College: And that the same Commonalty or College every year for ever shall be able to elect and make out of that Commonalty some prudent man and expert in the faculty of medicine as President of the same College or Commonalty, to oversee, superintend, and govern for that year the College or Commonalty aforesaid, and all men of the same faculty and their affairs: And that the same President and College or Commonalty shall have perpetual succession and a common seal to serve for the affairs of the said Commonalty and President for ever: And that they and their successors for ever shall be persons able and capable to

¹ 1st President of the College. Born 1460/2 Died at 63 in 1524.

² He was a Spaniard, and was paid £66 13s 4d this year (1518) for bringing his wife from Spain. He is called the "Queen's Physician" in one place.

³ Born in London 1482

acquire and possess in fee and perpetuity lands and tenements, rents, and other possessions whatsoever.

WE HAVE ALSO granted to them and their successors for us and our heirs, that they and their successors shall be able to acquire to them and their successors, as well in the said City as without, lands and tenements whatsoever not exceeding the yearly value of twelve pounds, the statute concerning alienation to mortmain notwithstanding: And that they, by the names of the President, College or Commonalty of the faculty of medicine of London, shall be able to plead and be impleaded before whatsoever judges in courts and actions whatsoever. And that the aforesaid President, College or Commonalty and their successors shall be able to make lawful and honest assemblies of themselves, and statutes, and ordinances for the wholesome government, over-sight, and correction of the College or Commonalty aforesaid, and of all men exercising the same faculty in the said City or within seven miles in circuit of the same City, according to the requirements of necessity as often as and whensoever there shall be need, lawfully and with impunity, without impediment of us, our heirs or successors, or of the Justices, Escheators, Sheriffs, and other bailiffs or ministers of us, our heirs or successors, whomsoever.

WE HAVE also granted to the same President and College or Commonalty, and their successors, that no one in the said City, or for seven miles in circuit of the same, shall exercise the said faculty, unless he be admitted thereto by the said President and Commonalty, or their successors for the time being, by letters of the same President and Commonalty, sealed with their common seal, under pain of one hundred shillings for every month during which not having been admitted he has exercised the same faculty; half thereof to be paid to us and our heirs, and half to the said President and College.

MOREOVER, we will and grant for us and our successors as much as in us is: That by the President and College of the aforesaid Commonalty for the time being and their successors for ever, four men shall be yearly elected by themselves, who shall have the oversight and scrutiny, correction and government of all and singular physicians of the said City using the faculty of medicine in the same City, and of other foreign physicians whomsoever in any manner frequenting and using that faculty of medicine within the same City, and the suburbs thereof, or within seven miles in circuit of the same City, and the punishment of the same for their defaults in not well executing, doing and using it: And also the oversight and scrutiny of all manner of medicines and their receipts to be given, applied, and used by the said physicians or any one of them to such our lieges for curing and healing their infirmities and such like as often and whensoever it shall be needful for the benefit and advantage of our same lieges: So that the punishment of such physicians using the said faculty of medicine so offending in the premises may be executed by fines, amendments, and imprisonment of their bodies, and by other reasonable and fitting means.

WE WILL also and grant for us, our heirs and successors, as much as in us is, That neither the President nor any one of the College aforesaid of Physicians, nor their successors, nor any one of them exercising that faculty shall in any manner in future within our City aforesaid, and the suburbs thereof, or elsewhere, be summoned or placed, nor shall one of them be summoned or placed in any assizes, juries, inquests,

inquisitions, attaints, and other recognitions within the said City and the suburbs thereof, henceforth to be taken before the Mayor, or Sheriffs, or Coroners of our said City for the time being, or to be summoned by any of his or their officer or officers, or minister or ministers: Although the same juries, inquisitions, or recognitions shall have been summoned upon the writ or writs of right of us or our heirs: But that the said Masters or Governors and Commonalty of the faculty aforesaid, and their successors, and each of them exercising the said faculty shall be quit and thoroughly discharged therefrom against us, our heirs and successors, and against the Mayor and Sheriffs of our City aforesaid for the time being, and their officers and ministers whomsoever for ever by these presents: PROVIDED that these our letters, or anything contained in the same, shall not turn to the prejudice of our City of London or of the liberties thereof: And this without fine or fee for the premises or the sealing of these present to be made, paid, or in any way rendered to us: Any statute, ordinance, or act to the contrary before these times made, enacted, ordained, or provided in any wise notwithstanding.

IN WITNESS whereof we have caused these our letters to be made patent. WITNESS ourself at Westminster on the twenty-third day of September, in the tenth year of our reign.

TUNSTALL.

By the King himself, and of the date aforesaid, by authority of Parliament.

It is enrolled.

L.M.S.