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Memorial

Relating to the Royal Observatory at Greenwich

The Royal Observatory at Greenwich was founded by Order of King Charles the 2d. in the year 1675, and Mr. John Flamsteed was appointed Royal Astronomer, in order from repeated Observations to form Correct Tables of the true places of the Sun, Moon, Planets & fixed Stars, for improving the Art of Navigation.

Such Tables are still much wanted, and can only be constructed from a long Series of accurate Observations, for which the life of no one man is sufficient, even altho' he should arrive at the greatest age of man in these days, and retain all his faculties.

Since the death of Mr. Flamsteed his Observations at Greenwich from September 1675 to the end of the year 1719 have been published in two folio volumes.

Doctor Edmund Halley succeeded Mr. Flamsteed as Royal Astronomer, and upon the death of Dr. Halley, Doctor James Bradley was appointed to the same Office.

Neither of those Gentlemen published any regular Series of Observations, and the Manuscript volumes in which their Observa=tions had been recorded (and which ought always to have remained in the Royal Observatory) were upon their deaths carried off by their Executors, in whose custody they still remain, to the great detriment of the Publick.

Mr. Nathaniel Bliss the late Royal Astronomer held that Office only two years, and from his infirm State of health cannot be supposed to have made any great number of observa=tions.

It is of great importance to Navigation, that the person who shall be appointed to succeed Mr. Bliss in that Office, should be properly qualified, and laid under proper Restrictions.

It must be obvious that he ought to have no other

avocations

This should follow No. 50

Avocations which might divert him from the business of the Observatory, which requires a close attendance:

Therefore it should seem that a Professorship in either of the Universities, or any other employment which might oblige him to a Residence elsewhere, ought not to be conjoin'd with the Office of Royal Astronomer.

The person holding that Office, besides the Science of Astronomy and other parts of Mathematicks subservient thereto, should likewise be so far versed in practical Mechanicks, as to be able with his own hands to Correct and Adjust the several Instruments proper for Observation.

He ought to be confined to a Constant attendance upon the Observatory, and not to Absent himself for any length of time, without leave asked and obtained.

He and his Assistant Observer ought never to be absent from the Observatory both at the same time.

He ought to be restrained from admitting persons into those rooms of the Observatory where the Instruments are kept, unless he or his assistant shall be present, and no money should be taken by any of his Domesticks or others, from persons who are admitted to see the house or Instruments. Several of the Instruments have been damaged on former occasions, by admitting numbers of persons at one and the sametime, from whom gratifications in money had been exacted by those who gave them admittance.

He should be obliged to Record all his Observations in Books kept for that purpose, and to authenticate the same by the Subscription of his name at the bottom of every page.

The assistant Observer should be obliged to keep seperate Books of the Observations he shall make, and authenticate the same in the manner above mentioned.

These Books of Observations should never be removed from the Royal Observatory upon any pretence whatsoever, but should remain there together with the Instruments for the use of future Astronomers.

The Royal Astronomer and his Assistant should take an Oath upon their being appointed; To mark down faithfully the Observations and Times as they shall appear to them

Severally,

Severally, and to deal faithfully and honestly in all things belonging to the Trust committed to them, during their employ=
=ment in that Capacity.

The Late Queen Ann by a letter under her Royal Sign manual dated the 12th December 1710, and Directed to the President of the Royal Society for the time being, was pleased "to appoint "the said President and in his absence the Vice President, together "with such others as the Council of the Royal Society should think "fit to join with them, to be constant Visitors of the Royal "Observatory at Greenwich."

By this appointment they are authorized and required "to "demand of the Royal Astronomer for the time being, to deliver to "them within six months after every year shall be elapsed, a "true and fair Copy of the annual Observations he shall have made."

They are farther required "to Direct the said Astronomer to "make such Astronomical Observations as they in their judgment "should think proper."

They are also required "from time to time to Survey & Inspect "the Instruments in the said Observatory, and as often as they "should find any of them defective, that they should inform "the Principal Officers of the Ordnance thereof, that so the said "Instruments might be either exchanged or repaired."

The above mentioned appointment being only under the Queens Sign Manual, ceased upon her Majesty's Demise, and from the time of Mr. Flamsteed's decease, no regular Copys of the Observations made by the Royal Astronomers have been delivered to the Council of the Royal Society.

September 1764.

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54 Memorial

Relating to the Royal Observatory at Greenwich

Sept.r 1764

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54 Memorial

Relating to the Royal Observatory at Greenwich

Sept. 1764

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Memorial
Relating to the
Observatory at
Sept. 8th