

## A LONDON TAVERN IN 1644

By the Very Rev. Mgr. D. SHANAHAN

The old Mitre Tavern in the Strand disappeared long ago and not a trace of it remains, not even a plaque on the wall. It stood on the south side of the Strand very nearly opposite the spot where Drury Lane entered the Strand before Bush House was built. Nevertheless, although all physical trace has vanished, a vivid picture of the old tavern is conjured up by an inventory of its "goods, chattells, howsehold stuffe and implements of howsehold" which was drawn up and attached to a bill of sale dated 18 May, 1644. The inventory is contained in a deed in the manuscript archives of the Old Brotherhood of the English Secular Clergy.

The vendor was Thomas Langton, described as "Citizen and Vintner of London". He appears in the lists of the Vintners' Company from 1628 until he died in 1659. He was one of the searchers of the Company from 1645 to 1657 and was a warden in 1655.<sup>1</sup> The other parties to the sale were Thomas Burrows, of Longfield Court in the county of Kent, and John Warner, tallow chandler of London, but the sale was for the benefit of Thomas and Anthony Tilden, sons of William Tilden, a tanner of Dartford in the county of Kent, deceased. The reason for the sale was that Thomas Langton had married Parnell Tilden (*née* Godden) the widow of William Tilden, and this was part of the marriage settlement. Thomas Tilden (1624-1688), studied at Queen's College, Oxford, and at St. John's College, Cambridge, proceeding B.A. in 1641; but under the influence of John Sergeant, with whom he had become acquainted during his college course, he became a Roman Catholic and in 1642 he set out for the English Theological College in Lisbon. He was ordained a priest and distinguished himself as a scholar, becoming President of the College in 1655. In 1662 he returned to England as private chaplain of Catherine of Braganza, who was about to become the bride of Charles II. He died in London on 1 December, 1688, and was buried under the Royal Chapel in Somerset House. Because of the disabilities under which Roman Catholics were labouring at the time, he is more commonly known under the alias of Thomas Godden.<sup>2</sup> It is not clear that the Queen's private chaplain owned a tavern in the town—presumably he merely enjoyed the rents from the lease of the property; but the deeds and parchments passed into a private Catholic archive and there they remain to this day.

The value of the document reproduced below is the detailed, room-by-room, description of a London tavern in the year 1644.

“The Schedule of the goods, chattells, howseholdstuffe and implements of howsehold sold by the saide Thomas Langton by this presente deed.

*IMPRIMIS in their owne lodginge chamber*

1 high bedstedd with a trundle bedstedd	00.06.00
2 ioyned drawers and 2 deskes	04.10.00
1 nest of boxes for spice	00.02.06
3 old boxes and a box of drawers	00.04.06
6 high stooles wrought & 4 greene low stooles	00.08.00
2 chaires and 2 trunckes	00.06.06
1 ioyned chest with a little cubbord fast to the wall	00.03.00
1 ioyned table & a ioyned stoole with a drawer in it	00.03.06
1 high cubbord for linnen	00.03.00
Item 3 featherbedds & 2 feather bolsters and 6 pillowes	05.08.00
1 mattis and one matt	00.04.00
1 rugg & 3 blanketts and 2 cushions	00.06.00
Old curtaines & vallours about the high bed with 1 coverlidd	00.05.00
1 pewter cesterne & a scollope candlestick of pewter	00.03.00
1 paire of brass Andirons	00.10.00
1 paire of iron doggs in the chymney, 1 fire shovell, 1 forke, 1 paire of tonggs	00.12.00

*In the maids chamber*

Item 1 halfhedded bedstedd, 1 old cubbord & 3 old ioyned chests	00.09.00
2 Fethebedds & 1 flockbedd, 3 boulsters, 2 blancketts, 1 coverledd	02.05.00

*In the Roome called the Myter*

Item 1 large round table with 1 carpett	00.10.06
8 high leather chaires & 1 greate cloth chaire	00.19.00
1 old side table & a creeper a paire of Andirons & a firebacke	00.10.00
Old hangings of stript <sup>3</sup> stuffe about the roome with 2 curtaines and curtaine rodde	00.05.00

*In the Roome called the George*

Item 6 old greene high stooles and 2 old chaires	00.06.00
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1 table with an old forme and one high presse	00.07.06
1 paire of Andirons and a creeper	00.01.04

*In the Roome called the Bull head*

Item 2 old tables with one forme & 3 leather chaires	00.06.06
1 greate greene chaire, 1 cort cubbord	00.02.00
1 paire of Andirons, 1 carpett, 1 cubbord cloth	00.03.00

*In the Roome called the Queenes head*

Item one drawing table & 1 round table with a cort cubbord	00.05.06
5 chaires & one paire of Andirons	00.08.00
1 carpett and cubbord cloth	00.01.00

*In the Mens chamber*

Item 2 halfe hedded bedstedds	00.02.00
1 feather bedd & 2 flock beds	00.15.00
4 bolsters, 4 blancketts and 2 coverlidds	00.06.06

*In the Roome called the Lyon*

Item 1 round table and 1 cort cubbord	00.08.00
6 leather chaires, 6 low stooles	01.01.00
5 chaires of green cloth, 1 high bedstead	00.13.04
2 featherbedds and 3 blancketts & 1 coveredd	06.16.08
Curtains and Vallours of green stuffe for a bedde	01.05.00
2 bolsters and 4 pillowes	01.02.00
Old hangings of daring round about the roome	00.16.00
3 curtains for the wyndows with 2 curtain rodde	00.02.06
1 paire of creepers in the chymney with fireback & fire shovell	00.05.00

*In the Roome called the Talbott*

Item one highe bedstedd with a chest & a round table	00.13.00
2 Feather bedds, one Rugg & 3 white blancketts	03.00.00
Greene curtains & Vallours to the bedd of cloth	00.05.00

*In the Garrett*

Item one old drawing table with other lumber vallued att	01.00.00
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*In the kitchen*

Item 40lb. of pewter in dishes	03.06.08
2c pounce of pott mettell brasse	04.00.00
½ a c lb. of brasse in kettels and skilletts	01.17.00
3 Frying panns, 1 jack & weit, 1 racke, 1 paire of Fire irons, 2 firehovells, 1 Forke, 1 paire of tongs	01.08.10

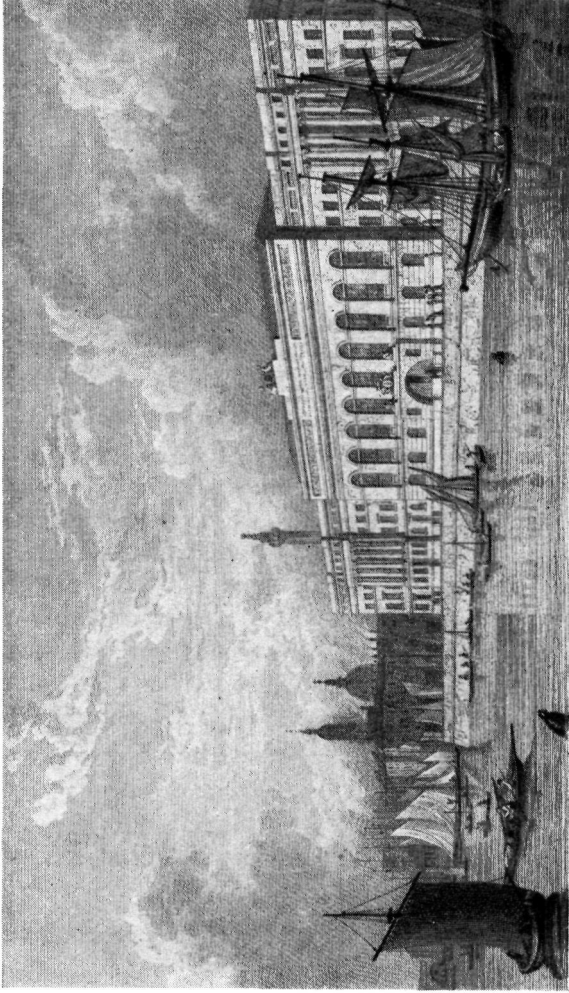


Plate 5

LAING'S CUSTOM HOUSE IN 1825

From an engraving in the Library, H.M. Customs and Excise

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5 pott hangers & 2 gridirons, 4 dipping pannels, 5 pott hooks	00.10.06
2 iron potts, 2 iron kettles, 10 spitts and other lumber vallued att	02.00.00

*In eight small drinking Roomes*

Item Eight small tables and benches to them and other lumber below staires	00.16.00
About the barre 3 small leaden cesternes	01.00.00

*In the celler*

Eight peeces of Spanishe wyne	136.00.00
1 hogshead of decaide wyne	04.00.00
2 Butts of wyne & Lees	05.00.00
1 hogshead of Redd wyne	08.05.00
2 hogsheads and a halfe of White Wyne	16.11.03
10 gallon potts, 3 pottle potts, 13 quarts, 13 pints, two $\frac{1}{2}$ pints	05.02.06

*In lynn*

16 pairs of sheets, 6 pairs of pillow beeres	05.10.00
1 dozen of table clothes, 8 dozen of napkins, 14 dozen of Taverne towells	07.10.00

*In the yard*

In wood & coles	08.00.00
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[250.03.01]''

## NOTES

- 1 Cf. K. Rogers, *The Mermaid and Mitre Taverns in Old London* (1928).
- 2 Cf. *Catholic Encyclopedia*, s.v. Godden.
- 3 i.e. striped.