

KING'S LYNN—GREENLAND FISHERIES BUILDING

By MRS. M. BARDSWELL

PAINTINGS DISCOVERED IN TWO ROOMS AFTER THE HOUSE WAS BOMBED DURING THE WAR

IN a large room on the first floor, paintings were found on two of the walls, covered by five layers of wall-paper. These have been carefully cleaned and preserved, 1952, by me.

The wall next to the street has wooden panelling painted in a design of Jacobean strap-work including, in the upper part, an inscription in black-letter :—

As nothings is so absolutely blest
But chance maye crosse & make it seeminge ill
So nothings cane a man so much molest
But God can chang and seing good he will (see Pl. I).

On a beam above the window :—

In thy preasence is the fulnes of joye of God & at thy right hand ther are pleasures for evermore. Psal. 16.11.

The wall, over, and beside the door, with the return wall to fireplace, has the subject—painted on the plaster—of Dives and Lazarus in Heaven and Hell respectively. An inscription underneath has almost entirely perished, but in a copy of the painting done in 1864 and preserved in King's Lynn Museum, it reads, as well as can be interpreted :—

Thou in thy life thy pleasures had but Lazar he felt paine
Now therefore he comforted is with heavenly foode above
Which when he begged but . . . of the ye didest him disdane
Wherefore ye now tormented art & from thence cannot move (see Pls. II, IIA).

All that remains of the subject is Dives cast naked into the flames of Hell by two devils, while round the corner, on the return wall, is a larger devil who seems to be dancing. In the copy, which shows the picture complete, over the door, in the upper part and to the L, Lazarus is seen seated on the knees of Abraham, a bearded figure dressed in a red cloak and with a rayed nimbus ; winged half-angels fly around. One of these angels remains, and a fragment of Abraham. A cloud-border separates Heaven from Hell. In the L-most part of Hell three small devils were to be seen hurrying away towards the flames of Hell with the soul of Dives.

Over the fireplace is painted an elaborate architectural composition containing, under painted arches, the figures, three-quarter length, of Faith (Fides) holding a cross and a book, and Hope (Spes) with a falcon on her right hand and the upper part of an anchor in her left hand, whilst above and between the two latter, is a small figure of Justice, with her scales. To either side is a seated

Plate I



(By kindness of Miss Keith)

Photo : G. Barker

On east wall of first-floor parlour.

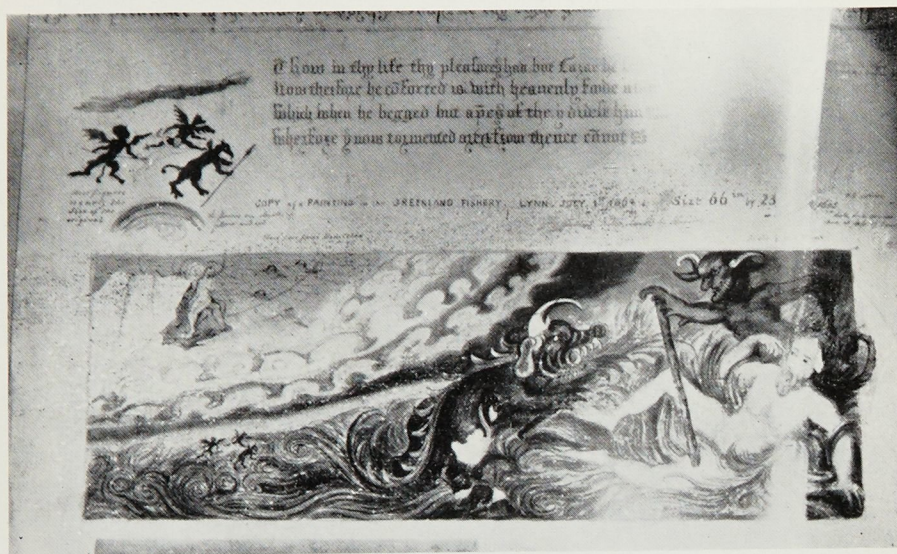
Plate II



Photo : G. Barker

First-floor parlour : painting on plaster beside the door.

Plate IIA



Photograph of copy in Museum.

Photo : M. Bardswell

Plate III



(By kindness of Miss Keith)

First-floor parlour : over fireplace.

Photo : G. Barker

Plate IIIA



Photo : M. Bardswell
Photograph of copy in Greenland Museum.

Plate IV



Photo : M. Bardswell
Photograph of copy in Greenland Museum.

Plate V



Photo : G. Barker

In room on second floor.

angel. Above the figure of Faith is the Royal Arms of James I and J.R., whilst about Hope is the Prince of Wales' feathers surrounded by a rayed border, and H.P. for Henry Prince of Wales, son of James I. At the bottom of the painting in the centre are the initials of John Atkin, who built the house.

The house was built in 1605 and Prince Henry died in 1612, so the painting can be dated within a few years (see Pl. III).

There is a copy of a fragmentary painting which seems to have represented a woodland scene, with a boy holding two dogs in leash, some trees, and a rabbit or hare feeding to the right of the composition (see Pl. IV). Possibly this painting was on the next wall, where there is a door leading to a bedroom, as there are some signs of green paint which may represent trees, on a beam, which may have formed the upper part of the picture. No other signs of painting were found on this wall.

In the room above, now a bedroom, the wall around the fireplace had been painted in a Jacobean strap-work design in black and a little red on a white plaster ground. Only a small part of this design remained. The wall plaster was in very poor condition and falling away in powder, it was found possible, however, to preserve sufficient to show the nature of the decoration. After the bombing, and before the face of the plaster fell away, the date 1612 could be traced in the centre of the design (see Pl. V).