

through other sources, and I have made it the foundation of a Christmas story myself. But it is too well authenticated to be omitted here. The last fifteen years of my father's life were passed on his own estate of Langham, in Norfolk, and amongst his county friends were Sir Charles and Lady Townshend of Rainham Hall. At the time I speak of, the title and property had lately changed hands, and the new baronet had re-papered, painted, and furnished the Hall throughout, and come down with his wife and a large party of friends to take possession. But to their annoyance, soon after their arrival, rumors arose that the house was haunted, and their guests began, one and all (like those in the parable), to make excuses to go home again. Sir Charles and Lady Townshend might have sung, "Friend after friend departs," with due effect, but it would have had none on the general exodus that took place from Rainham. And it was all on account of a Brown Lady, whose portrait hung in one of the bedrooms, and in which she was represented as wearing a brown satin dress with yellow trimmings, and a ruff around her throat—a very harmless, innocent-looking young woman. But they all declared they had seen her walking about the house—some in the corridor, some in their bedrooms, others in the lower premises, and neither guests nor servants would remain in the Hall. The baronet was naturally very much annoyed about it, and confided his trouble to my father, and my father was indignant at the trick he believed had been played upon him. There was a great deal of smuggling and poaching in Norfolk at that period, as he knew well, being a magistrate of the county, and he felt sure that some of these depredators were trying to frighten the Townshends away from the Hall again. The last baronet had been a solitary sort of being, and lead a retired life, and my father imagined some of the tenantry had their own reasons for not liking the introduction of revelries and "high jinks" at Rainham. So he asked his friends to let him stay with them and sleep in the haunted chamber, and he felt sure he could rid them of the nuisance. They accepted his offer, and he took possession of the room in which the portrait of the apparition hung, and in which she had been often seen, and slept each night with a loaded revolver under his pillow. For two days, however, he saw nothing, and the third was to be the limit of his stay. On