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## The Glass Decanter.

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"There is one thing we have not got," said a newly married wife, wiping down the shelf of her nice little closet, which certainly seemed well filled with all things necessary for comfort and order.

"What is it, Fanny?" asked James, the husband, still lingering at the breakfast table.

"A decanter. We have nothing to put our liquor in when we want to treat our friends. We certainly must have a decanter."

This begins to sound like a strange 'must have' now-a-days, but it was not exactly so when Fanny was married. James put his hand in his pocket and drew out some change, which he counted over to see whether it was enough for the purchase.

"I'd buy a good one," said Fanny: "while I was about it; not thin glass that will break in a minute, but a good, handsome cut-glass one; it will be cheaper in the end, you may depend upon it." Fanny, perhaps was a little ambitious.

James thought he had not quite money enough in his pocket, but he should finish a job about noon, the wages of which he guessed would not only get the decanter, but fill it with spirit. Then James went forth to his work. What a neat two story house did James and Fanny Farmer live in! Besides it was all built by James himself. Every season of leisure, be it ever so short, he betook himself to "his spot," as he called it, where he worked all the more industriously, as the next day or the next hour might find him sought out by any one who wanted a good piece of joinery done. There was quite a patch of ground around it, where potatoes, and corn, and beans, and several beds of other vegetables, had ample room to grow, enough for summer eating too. James had married Fanny, his first love, and she was in every way, young as she was, a fitting helpmeet for one who meant to get along in the world. What better prospects had James and Fanny?

Not many nights after, when James came home, he drew forth from his green baize jacket the best looking decanter he could find at Hobbs's as he declared. He held it up before Fanny, and then held it before the candle, and turned it this way and that way to see how clear and nice were its liquid contents.

"Let's try it," said James; "Hobbs said it was the very best; hand me a tumbler, Fanny."

"Oh no, James it's not for us, it's for company—let us have it," replied the economical wife.

"Only once—besides, you are tired; you have had a large wash. I should like a swallow myself, and I know it would do you good." So, with such reasons, what wonder that he went to the closet, took a tumbler, in which he put two or three spoonfuls of their best sugar, poured out a suitable quantity of Holland gin, to which he added some hot water from the tea-kettle. "It's excellent, Fanny," said James, stirring it around, and then taking a sip—"excellent tiddy;" and he offered it to his wife.

"No, James, you drink first; I like the leavings best." and Fanny rested from the folding of her clothes.

"Ah, you want the sugar in the bowl, I see. Why, Fanny, you are sweet enough;" and James quaffed down his smoking beverage.

"It seems to me you have not left much for me," said Fanny smilingly, taking the tumbler; "but it is as much as I want." And, taking the spoon, she leisurely finished the remainder. This glass of toddy from the new decanter!—it was hot—it was sweet—it was good—it was refreshing—it was not too little or too much—it tasted just right. What harm could this ever do this happy couple, as she sat there toe to toe, by that bright cheerful blaze! Ah! it was the harm of a *fatal first step* towards ruin. No danger seemed lurking near; but a foe had entered the house; with noiseless step and slow, was it creeping its way already into the life-blood of you'h, health and joy.

Who can describe the joy of those young people when a baby was given to their care! The parents, with parents' fondness, felt that no baby was like theirs—such eyes, such hair, so fat, so knowing; Fanny's soul was full of joy. Her husband and child filled up her heart. With them, what else had she to wish for? A shadow sometimes crossed Fanny's path. At first it was only like the shadow of a summer cloud upon the green fields—a strange foreboding like the far-off coming of a coming storm. Among all the increasing wants of the little household, there was nothing that so often wanted filling as the glass decanter.

Once—once when Fanny's fancies assumed the form of resolutions—on hearing the distant step of her husband in the yard, she arose, with the sleeping baby in her arms, went to her keep-room closet, and taking up the decanter from its prominent place on the lower shelf, she put it in the little cupboard beneath, and turned its key. Fanny returned to her rocking chair with a palpitating heart. James presently came into the kitchen and replenished the fire beneath the broiling dinner; then he bent lovingly over the baby, and took up its little legs in his; then did he saunter carelessly into the keep-room, and she heard the door creak upon its hinges. Fanny trembled, she felt she would have given any thing to undo what she had just done. "How suspicious he must think me!"—"how little confidence in him!"—"what will he think!"—and she thought over all he had done for her. Fanny wondered how she should busy herself, that she might not notice his return; she aroused the baby and began to toss it in her arms, and talk to it a pretty baby talk, which mothers know how to use. When her husband came back, he passed through the room without speaking—not one word for the little baby. Fanny felt reproached. About half an hour before dinner, James re-entered the kitchen and took a low seat by the fire. The baby crept up towards his feet, but he took no notice of its playful chucklings.

"Are you sick, James?" asked Fanny, placing her hand on his shoulder.

"I am not very smart," he answered sulkily.

"What will you have? You have taken cold, it's so very raw. Let me make you a good bowl of sage tea," said Fanny kindly.

"Sage tea!" echoed the husband scornfully. "I don't want any old woman's nostrums for me. He rested his elbows upon his knees, and put his head between his hands. Fanny pitied him.

"What will you take, James?" asked Fanny again. "Shant I make you something hot?" "I guess you had better. Is there anything in the house?" and he looked up with great interest. "Well, poor James is sick, and he