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IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

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The Tale of Fatty Coon: Fatty Coon Goes Fishing (5/20)

One day Fatty Coon was strolling along the brook which flowed not far from his home. He stopped now and then, to crouch close to the water's edge, in the hope of catching a fish. And one time, when he lay quite still among the rocks, at the side of a deep pool, with his eyes searching the clear water, Fatty Coon suddenly saw something bright, all yellow and red, that lighted on the water right before him. It was a bug, or a huge fly. And Fatty was very fond of bugs—to eat, you know. So he lost no time. The bright thing had scarcely settled on the water when Fatty reached out and seized it. He put it into his mouth, when the strangest thing happened. Fatty felt himself pulled right over into the water.

He was surprised, for he never knew a bug or a fly to be so strong as that. Something pricked his cheek and Fatty thought that the bright thing had stung him. He tried to take it out of his mouth, and he was surprised again. Whatever the thing was, it seemed to be stuck fast in his mouth. And all the time Fatty was being dragged along through the



water. He began to be frightened. And for the first time he noticed that there was a slender line which stretched from his mouth straight across the pool. As he looked along the line Fatty saw a man at the other end of it—a man, standing on the other side of the brook! And he was pulling Fatty toward him as fast as he could.

Do you wonder that Fatty Coon was frightened? He jumped back—as well as he could, in the water—and tried to swim away. His mouth hurt; but he plunged and pulled just the same, and jerked his head and squirmed and wriggled and twisted. And just as Fatty had almost given up hope of getting free, the gay-colored bug, or fly, or whatever it was, flew out of his mouth and took the line with it. At least, that was what Fatty Coon thought. And he swam quickly to the bank and scampered into the bushes.

Now, this was what really happened. Farmer Green had come up the brook to catch trout. On the end of his fish-line he had tied a make-believe fly, with a hook hidden under its red and yellow wings. He had stolen along the brook very quietly, so that he wouldn't frighten the fish. And he had made so little noise that Fatty Coon never heard him at all. Farmer Green had not seen Fatty, crouched as he was among the stones. And when Fatty reached out and grabbed the make-believe fly Farmer Green was even more surprised at what happened than Fatty himself. If the fish-hook hadn't worked loose from Fatty's mouth Farmer Green

would have caught the queerest fish anybody ever caught, almost.

Something seemed to amuse Farmer Green, as he watched Fatty dive into the bushes; and he laughed loud and long. But Fatty Coon didn't laugh at all. His mouth was too sore; and he was too frightened. But he was very, very glad that the strange bug had flown away.