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IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

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The Tale of Fatty Coon: Fatty Grows Even Fatter (19/20)

When Fatty Coon's burned feet were well once more, the very first night he left his mother's house he went straight to the loggers' camp. He did not wait long after dark, because he was afraid that some of his neighbors might have found that there were good things to eat about the camp. And Fatty wanted them all.

To his delight, there were goodies almost without end. He nosed about, picking up potato peelings, and bits of bacon. And perhaps the best of all was a piece of cornbread, which Fatty fairly gobbled. And then he found a box half-full of something—scraps that tasted like apples, only they were not round like apples, and they were quite dry, instead of being juicy. But Fatty liked them; and he ate them all, down to the smallest bit.

He was thirsty, then. So he went down to the brook, which ran close by the camp. The loggers had cut a hole through the ice, so they could get water. And Fatty crept close to the edge of the hole and drank. He drank a great deal of water, because he was very thirsty. And when he had finished he sat down on the ice for a time. He did not care to stir about just then. And he did not think he would ever want anything to eat again.

At last Fatty Coon rose to his feet. He felt very queer. There was a strange, tight feeling about his stomach. And his sides were no longer thin. They stuck out just as they had before winter came—only more so. And what alarmed Fatty was this: his sides seemed to be sticking out more and more all the time.

He wondered what he had been eating. Those dry things that tasted like apples—he wondered what they were.

Now, there was some printing on the outside of the box which held those queer, spongy, flat things. Of course, Fatty Coon could not read, so the printing did him no good at all. But if you had seen the box, and if you are old enough to read, you would have known that the printing said:

EVAPORATED APPLES



Now, evaporated apples are nothing more or less than dried apples. The cook of the loggers' camp used them to make apple pies. And first, before making his pies, he always soaked them in water so they would swell. Now you see what made Fatty Coon feel so queer and uncomfortable. He had first eaten his dried apples. And then he had soaked them, by drinking out of the brook. It was no wonder that his sides stuck out, for the apples that he had bolted were swelling and puffing him out until he felt that he should burst. In fact, the

wonder of it was that he was able to get through his mother's doorway, when he reached home.

But he did it, though it cost him a few groans. And he frightened his mother, too.

"I only hope you're not poisoned," she said, when Fatty told her what he had been doing.

And that remark frightened Fatty more than ever. He was sure he was never going to feel any better.

Poor Mrs. Coon was much worried all the rest of the night. But when morning came she knew that Fatty was out of danger. She knew it because of something he said. It was this:

"Oh, dear! I wish I had something to eat!"