“There; you see it says ‘for a consideration.’ That means I have

bought it of you and paid you for it. Here's a dollar for you. Now

you sign it.”

So I signed it, and left.

Miss Watson's nigger, Jim, had a hair-ball as big as your fist, which

had been took out of the fourth stomach of an ox, and he used to do

magic with it. He said there was a spirit inside of it, and it knowed

everything. So I went to him that night and told him pap was here

again, for I found his tracks in the snow. What I wanted to know

was, what he was going to do, and was he going to stay? Jim got out

his hair-ball and said something over it, and then he held it up and

dropped it on the floor. It fell pretty solid, and only rolled about an

inch, Jim tried it again, and then another time, and it acted just the

same. Jim got down on his knees, and put his ear against it and lis-

tened. But it warn't no use; he said it wouldn't talk. He said some-

times it wouldn't talk without money. I told him I had an old slick

counterfeit quarter that warn't no good because the brass showed

through the silver a little, and it wouldn't pass nohow, even if the

brass didn’t show, because it was so slick it felt greasy, and so that

would tell on it every time. (I reckoned I wouldn't say nothing about

the dollar I got from the judge.) I said it was pretty bad money, but

maybe the hair-ball would take it, because maybe it wouldn't know

the difference. Jim smelt it and bit it and rubbed it, and said he

would manage so the hair-ball would think it was good. He said he

would split open a raw Irish potato and stick the quarter in between

and keep it there all night, and next morning you couldn't see no

brass, and it wouldnt feel greasy no more, and so anybody in town

would take it in a minute, let alone a hair-ball. Well, | knowed a

potato would do that before, but I had forgot it.

Jim put the quarter under the hair-ball, and got down and listened

again. This time he said the hair-ball was all right. He said it would

tell my whole fortune if I wanted it to. I says, go on. So the hair-ball

talked to Jim, and Jim told it to me. He says:

“Yo! ole father doan’ know yit what he’s a-gwyne to do. Sometimes

he spec he'll go ‘way, en den agin he spec he'll stay. De bes’ way is to

res’ easy en let de ole man take his own way. Dey’s two angels hov-

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