

The colonel's hands trembled a little as he folded the letter, and he cleared his throat in a somewhat boisterous way. Uncle Shade held out his hand for the letter.

"No, no!" the colonel cried. "It is for me. I need it a great deal worse than you do."

Thereupon he put the document in his pocket. Then he walked off a little way and leaned against a tree. A piece of crystal quartz at his feet attracted his attention. A mussel shell was lying near. He stooped and picked them both up and turned them over in his hand.

"What place is this?" he asked.

"Injun Bluff, suh."

"Didn't we come out here fishing once, when I was a little boy?"

"Yasser," replied Uncle Shade, with some animation. "You wa'n't so mighty little, nudder. You wuz a right smart chunk of a chap, suh. We tuck 'n' come'd out here, an' fished, an' I got you a hankcher full er deze here quare rocks, an' you played like dey wuz diamon's, an' you up'd an' said that you liked me better 'n you liked anybody 'ceppin' yo' own blood kin. But times done change,