

Ohio In Washington

“Friendship,” the Country Seat of John R. McLean

By Conrad Wilson

No Ohioan has played a larger part in the life of the national capital than John R. McLean, but this fact has never diminished his loyalty to his native state, in which he has always retained and still retains his legal residence. “Friendship,” his beautiful country estate, has a special place in Mr. McLean’s affections, and it is here described as a subject of public interest to Ohioans, thousands of whom are its master’s friends.



NO CITIZEN of Ohio and probably no citizen of the United States is more fortunate in the possession of a country seat than is John R. McLean, the well known Cincinnati capitalist, politician and newspaper proprietor. Mr. McLean has very extensive business interests in the city of Washington and vicinity and has of late years spent rather more time at the national capital than in the metropolis on the Ohio River. Thus it comes about that he has two residences, a town house and a country seat—or perhaps it might better be designated a suburban estate—in the District of Columbia.

The city dwelling of the McLeans is a commodious red brick structure located at the corner of Fifteenth and I Streets, facing McPherson Square and in the very heart of the fashionable section of the capital, but despite its many excellent qualifications the house is seldom occupied more than three months each year. The explanation of this seeming neglect is found in the exceptional attractions of the beautiful and artistic McLean country seat, appropriately named “Friendship,” and which is located so conveniently to Washington that it might almost be said to combine the best qualifications of both a city habitation and a rural retreat.

To persons who have experienced the prolonged and well nigh tropical heat of a

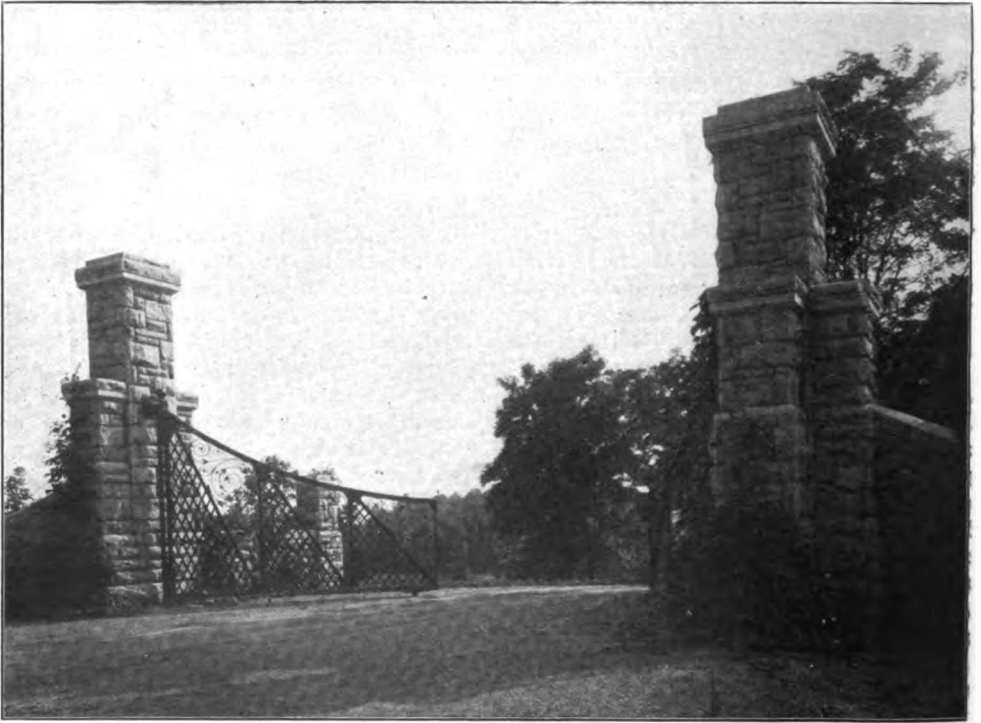
Washington summer, that drives from the seat of government many persons who from both inclination and sense of duty would much prefer to remain, not the least of the attributes of this unique estate is to be found in the contrast of its climatic conditions as compared with those of the urban community located a few miles distant. Friendship, although within sight of the United States Capitol and the Washington Monument, is more than four hundred feet above the city that lies spread out at its feet, and this altitude, combined with the influence of numbers of majestic old forest trees, enables it to rank, in the estimation of Mr. and Mrs. McLean, with any summer resort. With no disparagement, however, of the other seasons of the year it may be added that it is during the long spring and the protracted autumn characteristic of this region, that the owner of Friendship and his guests derive the keenest enjoyment from this ideal suburban playground.

Friendship is located northwest of the city of Washington in the neighborhood known as Tenallytown, a suburb rich in picturesque surroundings and places of historic interest. Across the road from the McLean estate is the quaint stone homestead built by Joseph Nourse, first Registrar of the United States Treasury. A few hundred rods distant is Mt. St. Alban, the site on which will be erected the \$5,000,000

national cathedral of the Protestant Episcopal denomination; and yet nearer is the monumental building of the Cathedral School for Girls, founded by Mrs. Phoebe A. Hearst. In the immediate neighborhood, also, is "Red-top," which was the summer home of President Cleveland during his service as Chief Magistrate of the Nation.

Mr. McLean's home, of which he is justly so proud, is one of the oldest residential estates in the vicinity of the na-

improvements on the property. When the slaves were freed in the Barbadoes and many of the island planters removed to the United States, the Friendship tract was purchased by Col. Plye, one of the wealthiest of the retired planters, who reconstructed the brick mansion and occupied it until his death. The estate was then sold to Georgetown (Roman Catholic) College. At that time the college was a theological rather than a lay school, and the beautiful estate on the heights above Washington

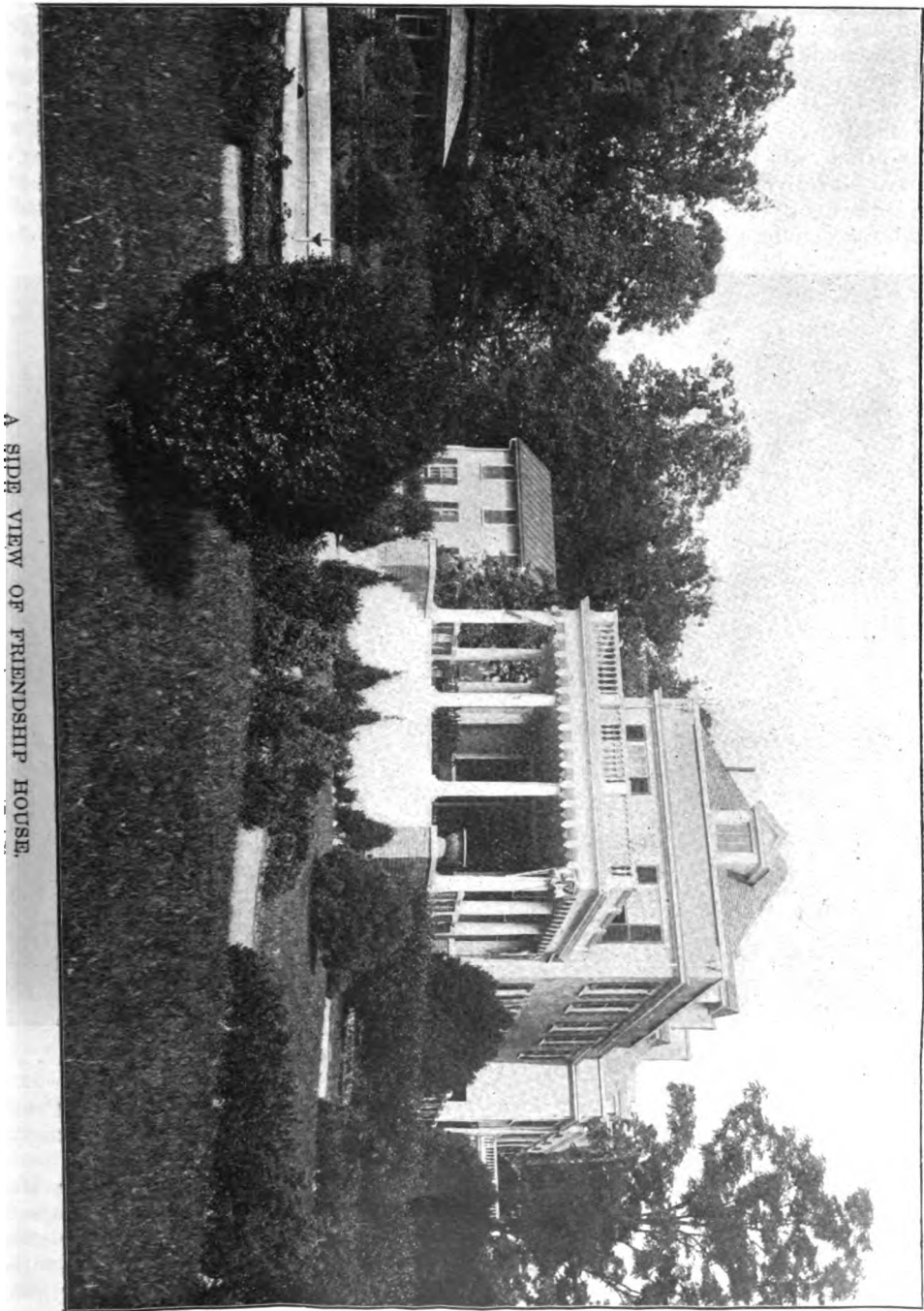


GATES AT THE MAIN ENTRANCE.

tional capital and has a history which enhances interest in it. Originally the estate comprised only about sixty acres, much of it heavily wooded. The house was built some years prior to 1800, of bricks brought from England, and its first occupant, so far as local chronicles indicate, was Dr. French, a well-to-do Washingtonian. After his death it was occupied for some time by his wife and then passed into the hands of Gen. Jessup, who was at the time Quartermaster General of the United States Army and who made many

was utilized as a "retreat" by the monks, particularly during the summer season.

The next change in ownership brought the historic place into the hands of John R. McLean, who considerably extended its boundaries by the purchase of adjoining tracts, among other acquisitions being a portion of the "Grasslands" estate then owned by the late William C. Whitney. The Friendship estate now comprises between eighty and one hundred acres, representing an investment on the part of the present owner of about \$4,000 per acre,

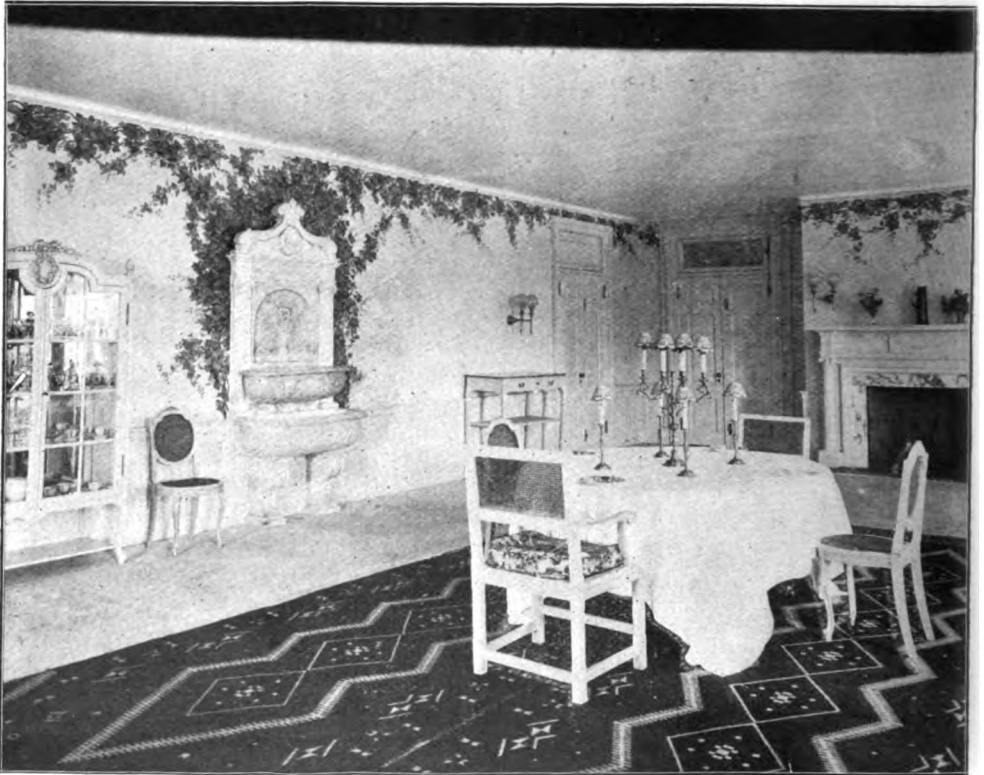


A SIDE VIEW OF FRIENDSHIP HOUSE.

exclusive of the cost of improvements, which have added many thousands of dollars to the total expenditure, so that it can be appreciated that from a financial as well as an artistic standpoint Mr. McLean possesses one of the most valuable domains in the country.

The estate, which is made up of rolling country, liberally interspersed with woodlands, presents a wonderful combination of formal gardening, in accordance with

either of two imposing gateways. The principal portal is flanked by monster posts of granite, which rise to a height of twenty-five feet and support massive iron gates that were formerly in use at the Mount Royal entrance to the famous Druid Hill Park, in Baltimore. The McLean estate has a frontage of more than half a mile on the public highway, and extending this entire distance is a substantial wall of granite. Midway in this ex-



DINING ROOM AT FRIENDSHIP LODGE.

English and Italian tenets, together with the informal ornamentation which is generally regarded as distinctively American. There are miles of the most admirable private roads on the estate, and they wind in and out among picturesque bits of woodland, now crossing a ravine by means of a rustic bridge or again treating the visitor to a passing glance of a romantic miniature cataract foaming over jagged rocks.

Friendship may be entered through

pane of wall is a fountain with broad pool, where man and beast may stop and refresh themselves.

The really notable features of landscape architecture are to be found in the immediate vicinity of the mansion. Following the twenty-foot limestone roadway, with its stone gutters on either side, the visitor approaches the rear of the residence, for the house, after the English fashion, faces the garden. The carriage entrance, with its old colonial portico, is at the north of

the building, and to the south the broad doors open upon a spacious veranda, flanked on either side by a brick-paved court with marble railings. In the expansive grass plot before the house the most conspicuous position is occupied by an ornamental fountain, on either side of which are semi-circular walks bordered by boxwood hedge, a relic of the early days of the place.

To the right of the house and spread

the water from which is carried down to feed a couple of adjacent ponds, spanned by rustic bridges and surrounded by rustic seats.

Close beside the mansion at Friendship is a rose garden whose petaled prizes are calculated to arouse the enthusiasm of all lovers of the queen of flowers; and nearby is a quaint conceit—a log cabin built some years since by Mr. Edward McLean, the son of the household. On the open land



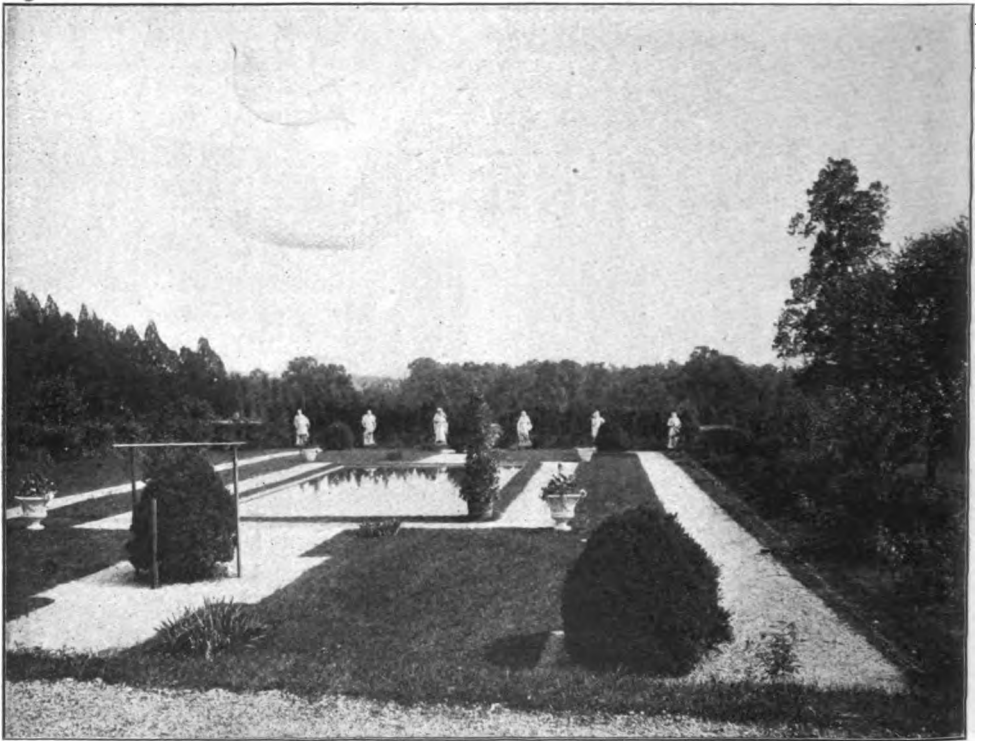
MR. McLEAN'S "DEN."

out before the side entrance is the very beautiful Italian garden. An oblong pond forms the center of a small court, surrounded by a hedge of California privet. Marble seats are placed at convenient intervals, and at one end of the garden are ranged six marble statues of Michael Angelo, Phidias and other celebrities of ancient times. Likewise adjacent to the house is the "Priest's Walk"—a long vista of grassy promenade and vine-covered arbor with over-hanging trees. Near the terminus of this walk there is a fountain,

near the house are tennis courts and a series of hurdles for exercising hunters, and near one of the main gateways is the famous clock and observation tower. This octagon-shaped structure was originally designed for use as a water tower, but this purpose was abandoned and it was converted into an ornamental clock tower, the deep-toned bell of whose time-piece may be heard for miles. A winding staircase affords access to the top of the tower, from which may be enjoyed a superb view of Washington and the surrounding country.

The mansion at Friendship has been greatly enlarged during the McLean regime, notably by the addition of a wing, but the main portion of the house remains practically as it was in the days gone by, and the walls of the entire structure are tinted a colonial yellow that is enhanced in effect by the background of green trees. Entering at the north door of the house the visitor is ushered into a magnificent hall that extends all across the rear of the

which by means of mail and telephone the master of Friendship directs many of his vast business enterprises. Adjoining this room and also opening from the hall, is the immense living room, an apartment as spacious as three or four rooms in the ordinary dwelling. The woodwork, alike to that in most of the other rooms, is finished in white enamel and bookcases line the walls. As in some of the other rooms, the wall hangings are of an old English



THE ITALIAN GARDEN AT FRIENDSHIP.

building. There is a marble floor, and the white walls contribute to the cool, restful, airy effect that is characteristic of the atmosphere of the entire house. This apartment is furnished in mahogany, and a feature of the room is the colonial staircase, to make drawings of which many of the most prominent architects in the country have made journeys to Friendship.

Opening from the hall at one end is Mr. McLean's private room, a combination of office, "den" and library. In the center of the room is a large flat-top desk, from

pattern, and the roomy, easy chairs, which justify the designation of the apartment as a "living room" in the truest sense of the term, have upholstery of a brilliant flowered pattern. A colonial fireplace, designed on the purest lines, occupies one end of this room, and in the middle of the big apartment is a huge reading table piled with the best current literature of two hemispheres.

Communicating with the living room is the breakfast room, a thoroughly dainty apartment. The walls are hung in yellow

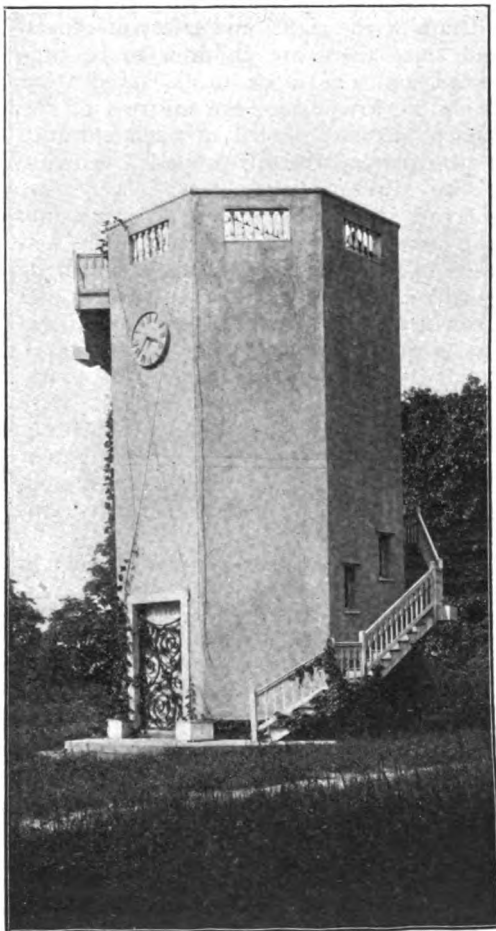
of the **satin-stripe** pattern, and most of the furniture is mahogany, although during the summer there are introduced cane-seated chairs finished in white enamel. A number of odd old plates adorn the walls, and surmounting the mantel are a trio of mirrors set in a highly ornate but very effective gold frame.

Beyond the breakfast room, in the wing which the McLeans added to the house, is the dining room, one of the special artistic triumphs in a country house, that is throughout an embodiment of good taste. This room has a marble floor, that feature having been introduced in accordance with cabled instructions to the builders from Mrs. McLean, who while traveling abroad chanced to see in an old French chateau a marble floor which so impressed her that she forthwith determined to have it reproduced in her reconstructed country seat. The furniture of the dining room is finished in white enamel, the effect being heightened by a brilliant hued Indian rug which covers the floor. There is most admirable harmony in the ornamentation of the walls, in representation of green ivy wandering over a background of ivory white, and set in the broadest expanse of wall space is a beautiful fountain of heavily carved white marble, which Mrs. McLean brought from Italy.

The second floor of the mansion is given over to sleeping rooms, but that the same rare judgment and artistic discrimination shown elsewhere in the house has extended to this portion of the residence is evidenced by a peep into one of the guest chambers. This particular room, with its twin single beds, is partially furnished in rattan, the heavier pieces being in white enamel. A clever innovation is the introduction in the ornamentation of the furniture of the same rose design which appears in the wall hangings, and this idea of making the chamber a bower of roses is still further carried out by the presence of the same floral ornamentation on the coverlets of the beds.

The appointments of the Friendship estate in the matter of outbuildings — embracing everything from the residences of the gardeners to the big stables — are all that would be expected in so complete a residential domain. The largest stable has

stalls for forty horses and storage space for several dozen carriages. Then there is an automobile garage and an immense cow house, separated from the above-mentioned stable by a paddock. The dog kennels are another adjunct that are perfection in point of equipment.



CLOCK AND OBSERVATION TOWER AT FRIENDSHIP.

Mr. and Mrs. McLean have not been content that only themselves and their immediate friends should know the beauties of Friendship. With a generosity worthy of emulation by others fortunate in the possession of this world's goods, they have thrown open their grounds to the public, and the splendid estate is in effect a free park for all the residents of Washington who choose to enjoy its beauties. One pro-

hibition only is made, and that is against automobilists. It is not that the occupants of the old colonial mansion have any particular antipathy to the motor vehicles, for all the members of the household use electric and gasoline cars continuously, but Mrs. McLean feels that automobile drivers as a class have not shown themselves considerate of the rights and safety of others, and since there are children to be protected and fine stock to be saved from fright at Friendship, the mistress of the manor has had posted at each entrance notices barring the self-propelled vehicles.

The McLeans have likewise been most generous in granting the use of their estate as a scene for lawn fetes, tournaments and other open-air entertainments in behalf of worthy causes. One of the most recent and likewise most notable of these carnivals was the great fair given during the spring of 1906. The gate receipts, amounting to upward of two thousand dollars, were donated to the sufferers from the San Francisco earthquake and twenty-three different charities shared in the income derived from the various money-making enterprises conducted on the grounds.

Finally, this suburban estate, so rich in historic associations, has yet one more romantic attribute worthy of enumeration in any catalogue of its charms. This comes

through its use at one time or another as a honeymoon retreat for pairs of lovers in whom the world has felt an especial interest. The most conspicuous names in this roster are, of course, those of the recent White House bride and Representative Nicholas Longworth. My readers will doubtless remember that when after the marriage of President Roosevelt's daughter the guests at the White House and the curious public outside were speculating as to the destination of the newly wedded pair, the happy couple quietly slipped away in an automobile and journeyed to Friendship, which had been turned over to the groom by his fellow-citizen of the Buckeye State, and where Mr. and Mrs. Longworth remained for several days, attended by the veteran servants of the McLeans. Years before a somewhat similar scene had been enacted, when the present Lord Curzon brought to Friendship for a honeymoon the former Miss Mary Leiter, a representative daughter of Columbia, whose recent untimely death was the cause of sincere mourning on both sides of the Atlantic.

In a word, it may be said Friendship is a physical interpretation of its master's character—free, generous, loving the beautiful, resentful of offense, but prodigal in its governing motive to make the world better for contact with it.

