

ridge that still rose above the road on their right ; while to the left, beyond partially cleared fields, stretched the calm expanse of the lake, sleeping softly, blue as the Mediterranean, in the afternoon light. The curve of the coast could be partially discerned, and the line of the distant horizon melted softly into the dissolving gray and blue cloud tints. The free, wide expanse of water seemed to refresh the tired travellers almost like a glimpse of the sea. After passing two or three clearings, each with its rough log hut and barns, the fields grew noticeably more fertile, and free from the black stumps so obnoxious to an English eye ; and John pointed out with pride "the Major's farm."

"And there's the house;" he added, indicating the place where a pretty large and substantial stone house was dimly to be seen behind a luxuriant orchard, laden with its pinky bloom. "They call it the 'big house' hereabouts, for it's a good bit bigger than any in these parts, but the Major calls it 'The Elms.'"

The name did not seem inappropriate, for at the gate leading from the road into the shrubbery in front of the house, two majestic elms, with round massive heads, whose long pendants drooped gracefully almost to the ground, towered like warders over the entrance. Behind them, weeping willows drooped beside maples and acacias, between which a straight walk led up to the open door, with its cool pillared porch festooned with Virginia