

letters of marque to equip a vessel at his own cost for the defence of the Columbia River. He pointed out to Mr. Monroe, then Secretary of State, how much had been achieved, dwelt upon the brilliant future that awaited the settlement, and entreated that his own efforts and the endurance and sufferings of his men might not be for nothing. But he waited in vain for a reply to repeated and urgent solicitations. The Washington Government was too absorbed with its own dangers to heed the exposure of a remote station, and was, moreover, nowise displeased that so comprehensive a hold upon the illimitable resources of the Pacific coast should be stricken from the hand about to grasp them. This exercise of democratic antipathy to private fortune was perfectly consistent, for had the Astoria project been successful, it would have conferred a greater domain than any ever yet controlled by a single citizen. The end was not long in coming. On November 30th, 1812, the British sloop of war *Raccoon* appeared off Cape Disappointment, and summoned



Mr. Astor's Residence, New York.  
(From a pencil drawing.)

McDougall to surrender, which he did with precipitation. The judgment of his employer, of those with him at Astoria, and of the Chinook Sachem, his one-eyed father-in-law, was that he betrayed his trust. For once Mr. Astor's knowledge of human nature was disastrously at fault. The fort was defensible, the river channel was difficult of navigation, and Comecomly declared his redoubtable braves, who numbered some hundreds, to be equal to the repulse of any landing force which might penetrate into the woods, which, as the *Raccoon's* company numbered but one hundred and twenty, was not impossible. But incentives and encouragements were wasted upon McDougall, and it is slender consolation to know that the fighting Sachem applied to his renegade son-in-law all the disparaging epithets known to the Chinook vernacular, and added to them the hard words he had gathered from the white man's civilisation.

So perished one of the most remarkable ventures of that period of early exploration; and it is worthy of note, as showing the popular ignorance that prevails