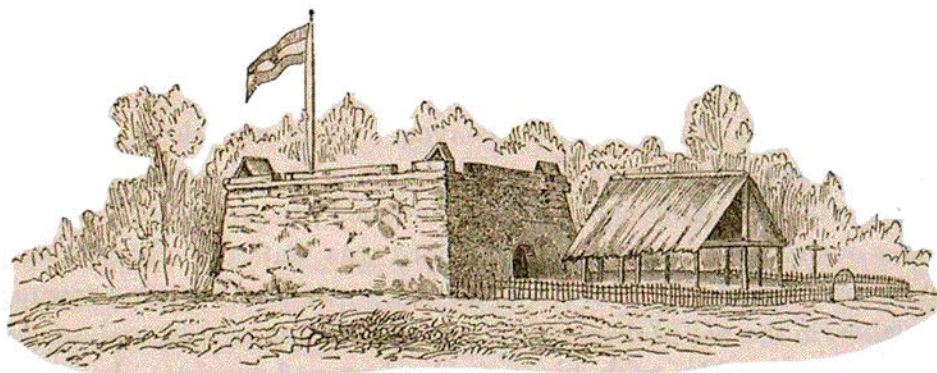


night, and were constantly engaged in sounding, with our patent lead, with from thirty to forty fathoms cast, to prevent our passing over this part of the sea entirely unexamined.

At daylight on the 31st, we had the island of Mindanao before us, but did not reach its western cape until 5 P. M. This island is high and broken, like those to the north of it, but, unlike them, its mountains are covered with forests to their very tops, and there were no distinct cones of minor dimensions, as we had observed on the others. If they do exist, they were hidden by the dense forest.

I had determined to anchor at Caldera, a small port on the southwest side of Mindanao, about ten miles distant from Samboangan, where the governor resides. The latter is a considerable place, but the anchorage in its roadstead is said to be bad, and the currents that run through the Straits of Basillan are represented to be strong. Caldera, on the other hand, has a good, though small anchorage, which is free from the currents of the straits. It is therefore an excellent stopping-place, in case of the tide proving unfavourable. On one of its points stands a small fort, which, on our arrival, hoisted Spanish colours.

At six o'clock we came to anchor at Caldera, in seven fathoms water. There were few indications of inhabitants, except at and near the fort. An officer was despatched to the fort, to report the ship. It was found to be occupied by a few soldiers under the command of a lieutenant.



FORT AT CALDERA.

The fort is about seventy feet square, and is built of large blocks of red coral, which evidently have not been taken from the vicinity of the place, as was stated by the officers of the fort; for, although our parties wandered along the alluvial beach for two or three miles in each direction, no signs of coral were observed. Many fragments of red, gray, and purple basalt and porphyry were met with along the beach; talcose rock and slate, syenite, hornblend, quartz, both com-