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THE ISLANDS OF THE SEA.

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Early on a lovely morning in August, 1796, a vessel might have been seen gliding out of the docks of London, from which could be heard the sweet strains of music, so unlike that of the sailors at such times that you would naturally pause to look and listen. There is nothing in the appearance of the vessel that differs much from the others, but the music is strange and startling. You trace it to a group of ladies and gentlemen standing on the deck of the vessel, and as you look and listen the words come floating distinctly over the still water, "Jesus, at Thy command we launch into the deep." What vessel can it be? What sort of passengers are those? You look for the name of the ship, and find that it is called *Duff*. You inquire, and find that the passengers are a band of missionaries. You naturally ask, Where are they going? what is their object? and you are told that they are a few humble, faithful followers of the "Captain of our Salvation," who have volunteered to go to the most distant parts of the earth and attack heathenism in its darkest and most dangerous places, and there plant the standard of the cross.

What an army for such a mission! and such a mission at such a time! It was like an angel of mercy rising amid the scenes of strife and blood and anarchy and crime which burst forth in appalling and destructive violence from the French Revolution, spreading horror and panic through surrounding nations. There were wars in America, ending in the independence of the United States. Wars in the East, leading to the establishment of the supremacy of England in India.

It was also a time of maritime discovery and scientific research. Men like Captain Cook returned from their voyages and gave stirring descriptions of the countries and tribes they discovered: hence the awakening of the Church to obey the last command of the great King and Saviour of men.