

FORWARD TO THE FRONT

and service was held in the saloon, attended by crew and passengers. Tracts were also distributed among the sailors, "accompanied by religious conversation."

Reaching New York on July 12, two days were spent at the Astor House Hotel, where they had the exciting experience of viewing a disastrous fire right across the street, when a large block of buildings, including Barnum's Museum, was destroyed. From New York they proceeded to Niagara by the Hudson River and New York Central Railway. On the way Mr. Bompas spent one night at Rochester to see Captain Palmer, of the American Telegraph Company.

"He informed me," wrote Mr. Bompas, "that a party of explorers were already on their way to Fort Yukon from Sidkar,* on the Pacific coast, with the view of carrying out the Company's contract entered into with the Russian Government for laying a telegraph-line through Siberia and across Behring's Strait, to join existing lines in America. Should the Atlantic cable prove successful, the Yukon line would, I suppose, complete the circuit of the globe."

Mr. Bompas considered the American railways rather noisy and jostling, and the large saloon carriages, holding about sixty people, less pleasant than the English style. At the same time, he thought the general arrangements were "good and expeditious," and admired the system of communication throughout the train and the "booking through luggage by duplicate 'cheques' or metal badges."

Leaving Niagara, they reached Chicago by way of Detroit. Here were seen "many soldiers returning from the war, some of them wounded, and most looking pale and sickly, reminding one too plainly of the many who never returned." From Chicago they went by rail to La Crosse, and thence by steamer to St. Paul. Here Dr. Schultz, a Red River merchant, and afterwards Sir John Schultz, Lieutenant-Governor of Mani-

* Sitka, until recently the capital of Alaska.