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CHAPTER III

FORWARD TO THE FRONT

SHORTLY after Mr. Bompas was accepted by the Church Missionary Society, he went to Salisbury Square and inquired how far it was to his mission-field, and the length of time required for the journey. When told it was about 8,000 miles, and that he was hardly likely to reach it that year, a smile passed over his face as he replied, "I see I must start with a small bag."

After he learned more about the country, a longing entered into his heart to start as soon as possible, and reach Fort Simpson, on the Mackenzie River, by Christmas Day. Was such a thing possible? No one before had ever done it in winter, and was it likely that the young, ardent missionary would be the first to accomplish the task? With this determination, Mr. Bompas was not long in making preparations for his journey, and on June 30, 1865, he left London for Liverpool, where he boarded the steamer *Persia*, bound for New York.

Mr. Bompas was surprised that this steamer burnt 100 tons of coal daily; but now the Cunard liner *Mauretania* burns 1,000 tons each day in 192 furnaces.

He travelled in company with the Rev. J. P. and Mrs. Gardiner and family and Miss M. M. Smith, who were going to the Red River. There were many passengers, mostly Americans, and for these an effort was made to hold service the first Sunday, but the captain refused to give his permission. On the following Sunday, however, they were more successful,