

conflagration occurred in June, and those who were suspected of being the cause of it were arrested, but it was impossible to secure their conviction, and robberies and murders became more and more common, until at last it was the general feeling that forbearance had ceased to be a virtue. Then the famous Vigilance Committee was formally organized "to watch, pursue and bring to justice the outlaws infesting the city, through the system of the courts if possible, through more summary processes if necessary." The committee did such extremely effective work that at the end of thirty days it was able to quietly disband. It was afterward reorganized, and was equally efficacious in 1856, when the city was threatened with similar dangers. And once more in 1877 this unique force came to the front in the interests of order and justice, but this time under very different auspices.

Although San Francisco was almost entirely destroyed by the terrible



MARKET STREET, SAN FRANCISCO.

fire of 1851, the enterprising citizens were by no means discouraged, but straightway went to work to rebuild their city, and by 1852 there were few characteristics of a Spanish town remaining in San Francisco. It had now assumed a more regular aspect, and substantial houses took the place of the huts of former years, though most of the structures were of wood,

as brick and stone were so hard to obtain, and there was a general dread of earthquakes.

The modern city is a strangely foreign-looking place, especially when viewed from the harbor. The business portion of the town lies at the foot of several hills on which most of the residences are built. These dwellings are even now more commonly built of wood, but, fear of earthquakes having somewhat abated, brick and stone structures have commenced to go up. The cable cars were first invented and used at San Francisco, and when the hills on which the city is built are considered, a better mode of