

TO SAN FRANCISCO THROUGH THE TROPICS.

BY A MONTREALER.

On a cold, bright afternoon in September, 1868, the good steamer "Henry Chauncey" steamed down New York Bay, with her living freight of over 900 souls, bound for Aspinwall, and ultimately for San Francisco. The usual confusion incident on starting on a long sea voyage was everywhere apparent,—trunks, valises, babies, hat-boxes, etc., were indiscriminately mixed together in the state-rooms, and every one was most blissfully uncomfortable. We passed Staten Island, lying there in all its autumn beauty, and at dinner-time were off Sandy Hook.

Alick Burrows' usual joviality and flow of spirits were considerably heightened as we sat down to dinner, at seeing one after the other of our neighbors at table suddenly rush fiercely on deck with the most intensified horror depicted on their faces—they were "sea-sick." Alick found a golden opportunity to indulge in an avalanche of puns, and was in the midst of them when he suddenly discovered that his soup was not at all nice. At the mere question of the steward, whether he wished some fish, his face assumed somewhat the expression of those "land-lubbers" who he thought "should have had a little practice in their cradles to accustom them to the rolling of the ship." This increased at the mention of several dishes of meat, and culminated at the sight of a plate of rice pudding, when he suddenly became aware that he was not hungry, and he thought he would take a stroll on deck. Jack Wallace and I exchanged a smile—a very knowing smile, as we saw Alick, who had at first sauntered slowly to the door, suddenly impart an impetus to his legs that was perfectly wonderful,—Jack and I were "old salts," and could well afford to laugh.

On coming on deck after dinner, we

found most of the passengers apparently intensely interested in watching the foam at the sides of the ship,—among these was our friend Burrows. "Alick," I said, "are you watching for mermaids?" His answer was a look full of the most bitter reproach and deepest agony. "Alick," I continued, in the way of torture, "will you smoke?" "No!" he yelled. "Alick, if I were you I wouldn't hang my head so much over the side of the ship; people will think that you are sick." A groan, which appeared to come from the innermost depths of his soul, was his only response. Ten minutes later he lay in his berth moaning, "Oh! why didn't I go overland?" The vessel presented a most pitiable sight by this time; here and there a family was huddled together, pale, shivering, with hair dishevelled and sunken eyes—the very picture of abject misery.

It blew pretty hard, and at dark, when we had lost sight of land, it increased to a gale. The huge ship plunged and staggered and rolled, now climbing up some mountainous waves, now sweeping down a watery precipice, occasionally rushing through a head wave, deluging her bows, and bringing a shower of spray right over the ship, or careening over so from side to side that the ends of the lower yard-arms were often buried in the hissing waters. The sky was as black as the sea, and that was as black as ink, with the exception of here and there where the huge waves dashed themselves into foam. The snatches of the sailors' song, which could be heard amid the roaring of the wind and waves, as they were shortening sail, sounded wild and weird; and the bell on the fore-castle, telling the hours, had, when it rang, something solemn in its tone that appeared to be quite in keeping with the storm. The many-colored glasses on the racks in the large