

OVERLAND TRAFFIC.

The growing immensity of the Overland carrying trade, as evinced by returns compiled by the Central Pacific Railroad Company, may be gathered from the rapidity of its progress. The railroads have been less than five years in operation, and the commencement of the traffic was necessarily slow. Many distant interior points with which we had very limited business connection, and many more that were entirely in the hands of Eastern merchants, had to be reached and controlled by our own people through the agency of the Trans-Continental Railroad. The little ball then set in motion has assumed such gigantic proportions that its future will be, undoubtedly, of the most vital importance to every interest in this State. Shipments eastward in 1872 were 65,284,000 pounds; in 1873 they were increased by only 9,000,000 pounds, their aggregate being 72,451,000 pounds; but in 1874 they went up to 149,000,000 pounds, or 5,000,000 pounds more than a gain of 100 per cent. Of this increase San Francisco had 58,000,000 pounds more than the year preceding. We have no means of ascertaining the amounts of merchandise received overland from the East, but it is reasonable to presume that they were correspondingly large. The returns furnished by the railroad company are very suggestive, as they show what particular classes of our products are required by Eastern consumers. A few of the leading items of freight, chiefly of California production, will prove of interest to the inquirer. Barley shipments have been enormously increased. In 1873 the trade sent forward 1,217,000 pounds, while only for the last quarter of 1874 not less than 37,896,423 pounds of this cereal were shipped. Of borax, shipments in 1873, 619,449 pounds; do. in 1874, 1,497,860 pounds. Of canned goods, chiefly fruits, in 1873, 658,185 pounds; in 1874, 1,132,291 pounds. Of dried fruits, in 1873, we sent East less than 100,000 pounds, yet in 1874 the amount was swelled up to 1,354,385 pounds. The hop shipments for 1873, by rail, 320,000 pounds; in 1874, 794,186 pounds. Of leather, in 1873, 159,169 pounds, and in 1874, 753,739 pounds. An increase of lumber of about 1,500,000 feet; of malt, an increase over the year previous, 1,811,567 pounds; of unspecified merchandise, an increase of 6,000,000 pounds, as compared with 1873. Of salmon, 6,432,021 pounds, showing an increase of 3,000,000 pounds, as compared with 1873. Syrup shipments in 1874, 4,000,000 pounds more than in 1873. Of sealskins, 1,473,860 pounds in 1874. Of tea we have sent East overland, in three years past, about 36,000,000 pounds, and equally divided, notwithstanding the very large amount turned off via Panama by the Pacific Mail Steamship Company. This one fact alone speaks volumes in favor of the Overland route for the carrying of teas—a saving in time of fully twenty if not thirty days; besides the teas are fresher and better every way for not being exposed twice to the tropics. The increased carrying trade in California wines is noticeable, being nearly 5,000,000 pounds against 7,000,000 pounds for the two years preceding. As for wool, shipments by rail for 1874, 30,000,000 pounds; 1873, 26,000,000 pounds; 1872, 17,675,000 pounds. On the other side, we mark a great falling off in coffee. Shipments to the East in 1872, 1,559,558 pounds; 1873, 4,101,836 pounds; in 1874, 923,353 pounds. The reason for this falling off of 3,000,000 pounds last year was owing to the heavy imports and Eastern panic, causing prices on the Atlantic to drop much lower than on the Pacific slope; consequently buyers in Chicago and St. Louis could purchase their coffee cheaper in Baltimore or New York than in San Francisco.

If these gathered evidences of surprising progress do not demonstrate the immense benefits conferred by the Overland Railroad we know of nothing that can.

SHIP BUILDING.

One of the most important elements in the progress of a great maritime port is the ship building industry, and it is gratifying to know that in this particular San Francisco is beginning to develop a deep interest. During 1874 thirty-two vessels, aggregating 2,392