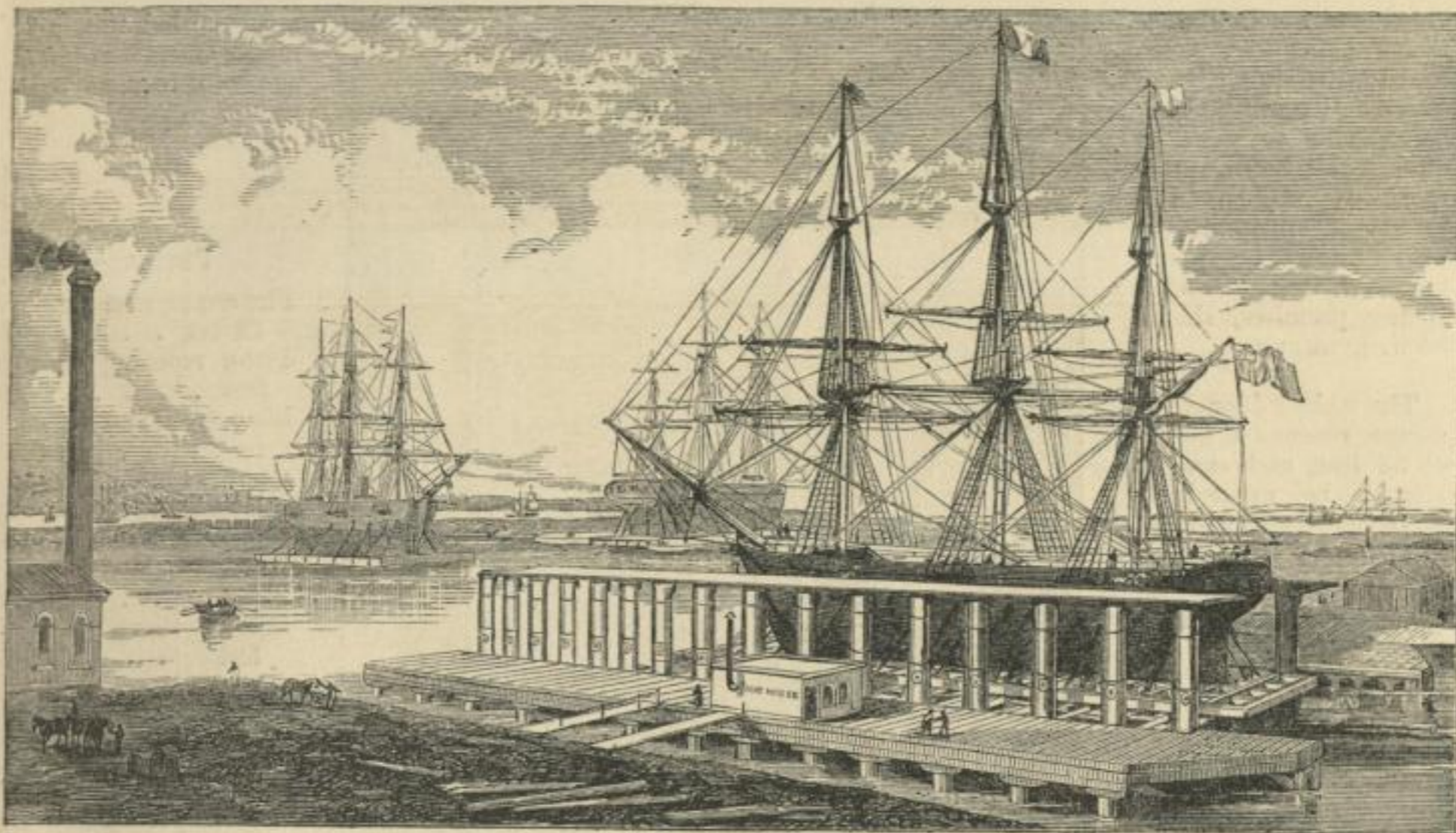


[ 2255 ]

CLARK, EDWIN, *Great George Street, Westminster.*—Model of Clark's patent hydraulic graving docks, Victoria Docks.



MODEL OF HYDRAULIC LIFT, GRAVING DOCKS (CLARK'S PATENT), AS ERECTED AT THE THAMES GRAVING DOCKS, VICTORIA DOCKS.

This model represents a plan for docking vessels, patented by Mr. Edwin Clark, and carried out on a large scale at the works of the Thames Graving Dock Company, where it may be seen in daily use.

The system is entirely novel, and differs from an ordinary graving dock in that, instead of the vessel being floated into a pit, and the water pumped out or allowed to run out with the tide, the vessel is raised bodily out of the water, cradled upon a shallow pontoon, on which it is afterwards floated away to any place convenient for its repair. The apparatus for these enormous lifts consists of a series of hydraulic presses contained in and supported by cast-iron columns sunk into the ground in two parallel rows, the space between being sufficient for the vessel to pass through.

From the cross-head of each ram the ends of a pair of girders are suspended; these girders pass across the dock, and form a platform, on which the vessel and pontoon are lifted.

The pumping power is a small steam engine placed near the presses, the communication between it and the presses being through wrought-iron pipes. The engine does not pump direct into the hydraulic cylinders, but into an intermediate valve-chest, by which the raising power is regulated, and the uniform rise of the whole ship and pontoon secured.

The pontoons are large, shallow vessels, constructed of wrought-iron framing and shell, and are divided into several water-tight compartments, in each of which is a valve; they are made of various sizes, corresponding with the weight of the vessels they are intended to

carry. The seven pontoons now in use vary from 160 to 320 feet in length, draw from 3 feet to 6½ feet when loaded, and carry vessels of from 500 to 3,000 tons.

The hydraulic rams will safely raise a dead weight of 6,000 tons, but can be adapted to lift any weight.

The peculiarities of this system are the raising the vessel to the level of the workshops and repairing-yards, and keeping it high and dry there in full light, exposed to the drying influences of the air; while, from the vessel being carried above the pontoon, its bottom is more accessible.

The blocking or shoring the vessel, under this system, is most effectually and rapidly performed, the operation being simply the drawing in of blocks fitted to the side of the vessel, which blocks are carried on the wrought-iron transverse girders. The pontoon, being highly elastic longitudinally, accommodates its shape to the keel of the ship, whatever be its form; thus insuring a perfect bearing throughout.

Each pontoon in itself forms a complete graving dock, and one hydraulic lift is sufficient for a great number of pontoons. The cost of a graving dock complete is, therefore, little more than the cost of the pontoon, which, for all ordinary vessels, varies from £600 to £10,000; and the rapidity of an operation is so great, that at least six vessels can be docked and set afloat in an ordinary working day.

The Thames Graving Dock Company, during the three years of their practical working, have most successfully docked upwards of 400 vessels, weighing 220,000 tons.