



THE NEW DOCKS AT TILBURY.

AT Tilbury Fort the river Thames makes a great and rather sudden bend, and looks on the map like an arm bent at the elbow. In this elbow, on the north side of the water, nestles the low grey fortification of Tilbury, famous in old times as a resort of good Queen Bess, and now for ever associated with the great career and the good works of General Gordon, the hero of Khartoum. It is a far cry from Tilbury to Khartoum, from the Thames at Gravesend to the White Nile; but the heroic qualities which General Gordon showed in the beleaguered

city of the desert were also shown in a quieter way during his work on the Thames defences. It was at Gravesend opposite that he collected the waifs and strays of the streets, and fed, clothed, and washed them with his own hands.

When, therefore, one comes in sight of Tilbury, on the broad river, with its russet-sailed lighters, and the smoky towers of Gravesend, one naturally thinks of Gordon; but a great change is about to take place about the quiet Fort of Tilbury which he knew. It will soon be the busy scene of a great dock, with ships from all parts of the world lading and unlading, cranes rattling, electric lights gleaming, and constant railway traffic. In fact, it will soon become the nucleus of a thriving town.

This transformation will be wrought by the opening of the new Tilbury Docks of the East and West India Dock Company, which are now being completed by a well-known firm of contractors.

A short journey from Fenchurch Street by the London, Tilbury, and Southend Railway, through a low, flat, pastoral country which very much resembles Holland, with its green polders and grazing cattle, its lazy dykes, and lines of willows, brings us to the west side of Tilbury Fort and the entrance to the new dock works in progress. Once within the confines of the works, a busy scene of labour presents itself: gangs of navvies at work on the railways and cuttings, piles of timber, puffing engines, wastes of stiff blue clay excavated from the basins in course of their construction, blazing fires and workshops, with here and there an engineer doing duty amongst the men. This tidal basin will have a water area of 19 acres and a depth of 26 feet at low-water spring tides, so that large steamers can enter or leave whatever be the state of the tide. The entrance to the main dock from this basin will be through a lock 700 feet long and 80 feet wide. The main dock is 1,600 feet long and 600 feet wide, and from it, on the northern side furthest from the river, sprout three branch docks, the central one being 300 feet wide, and



IN CASE OF ACCIDENT.

the other with an average width of 250 feet. The lines of quays along these docks are 13,000 feet in length, and capable of berthing thirty-two steam-vessels of the largest size, which can be loaded to their full draught alongside. Four large dry docks are also provided for repairing vessels.

The surface works, including the quay sheds and warehouses, and an extensive system of railway sidings, are well advanced. The quays will be provided with sixty hydraulic travelling cranes, and a floating derrick having a lifting capacity of fifty tons. The electric light will be installed permanently throughout the docks and offices, as well as in the hotel, and a steam laundry is to be established for washing purposes. In fact, the new docks will be provided with every convenience which experience has found to be desirable in such circumstances.

A word now as to the railway facilities for getting to and from the docks.

A liberal service of fast trains has been arranged for with the London, Tilbury, and Southend Railway Company. These trains will run between the Fenchurch Street terminus and Tilbury in thirty-five minutes. The dock lines of railway and sidings will be in connection at the Bow, Bromley, and Barking Junctions with the whole of the trunk lines on the north side of the Thames; and for the Continental traffic the Dock Company will obtain easy access to the South-Eastern Company's Wharf and the London, Chatham, and Dover Company's new water-side premises on the south side of the river. A town depôt for warehousing goods and produce will be established in Whitechapel; and a service of lighters will be insti-



A POINTSMAN.

tuted between the docks and the City wharves. It will be seen that ample means of communication between the new basins and the neighbourhood have been provided.

It is expected that the docks will be opened this year, but the works cannot possibly be entirely completed then. Some 3,000 men are now busy on the task, which was begun on the 8th of July, 1882.

The progress of the works has been much assisted by the use of the electric light.



IN THE MAIN DOCK.