

sustained by the gain made to English Independence. Perhaps the most pleasing feature of the evening was a letter from Mr. J. Hunter, now of Glasgow, who had been the choice of many of the Brixton friends. As a sample of Christian generosity we print it.

23, University Gardens, Glasgow.
January 18, 1887.

Dear Dr. Stevenson,—I am sorry that I cannot be present at your public recognition on Thursday evening, but let me say to yourself what I have said to others—how sincerely and heartily glad I am that you have been called to succeed our revered and beloved Baldwin Brown. The friends at Brixton have been wisely guided—more wisely, perhaps, than some of them knew, or know. Under your ministry the old and noble traditions of freedom and breadth will remain and form part of the continuous life of the church. While I have little sympathy with the religious liberalism that exists chiefly to fight what is called “orthodoxy”—for it is as narrow and one-sided as any other sectarianism—I am more and more convinced that the most comprehensive form of Christianity is ever the truest, and I rejoice that of this comprehensive Christianity, Brixton Church will remain the witness and the working place. May the blessing of God abide with you, and to your people may there be given grace to fulfil their new duties, and serve this new time according to the will of God.

I am, my dear Dr. Stevenson,
Faithfully yours,

JOHN HUNTER.

Mr. C. E. Escreet, vicar of St. Mary's, Battersea, was also present, and gave an address full of Christian warmth and catholicity. We congratulate our friend on his present happy position, and may the blessing of God continue to follow him and his until the journey ends.

OUR readers will note that we have added materially to our editorial staff on the page devoted to College items. We shall be glad of still further strength in other directions also.

THE GOSPEL AFLOAT.

BY THE REV. W. SCOTT.

CHAPTER III.—THE CHURCH IN THE FO'C'STLE.

The experience of “my first Sunday at sea” opened up new possibilities. On Monday morning we rounded Tarifa Point, and entered the Bay of Gibraltar.

As we were gazing on the giant rock before us, and steaming slowly up to our anchorage, a seaman passed me in the discharge of some duty; and as he passed whispered a word of thanks for what he was pleased to call “kind words to poor Jack yesterday.”

This unexpected recognition led to reflection. “We have a short meeting for prayer in the saloon for the passengers; why not have something like this for the men ‘for’ard’?” This was the thought which pressed itself upon me, and to which I determined, if possible, to give practical effect. Tuesday found us skirting the Spanish coast toward Cape de Gatta. We had hurriedly “done” Gibraltar, penetrating its wonderful “galleries,” gazing with wonderment at the picturesque Moorish and Spanish costumes which filled its streets, and were now *en route* for Malta. I had come to the resolution to try the experiment of a service with the men that very night.

Between the hours of six and eight in the evening was what was called the “dog watch,” that is a time of leisure for all but the few on that watch.

I laid my plans before the captain, and asked permission to put them into practice. He gave me *carte blanche* to do what I liked, cautioning me, however, that I might not receive as friendly a reception as I should like. I laid the matter before the Lord, and prayed for courage and wisdom in what was manifestly a difficult task. I had experience enough to know that if I won the confidence of the men, good might be done; if I made a false step, harm might be the issue. Very fearfully, I must confess it, did I venture to go “for’ard.” Lounging around the “for’ard hatch” were thirty or forty men—seamen and firemen—engaged either in a variety of games, or watching the fortunes of the players. There were cards, dice and draughts. For some time I stood a spectator of their enjoyment, hazarding a word ever and anon to some player who was garnishing a brilliant move of his opponent by an ugly oath. “Swearing won’t help you to win the game.” “No, no, sir” was the only response I could get.

After seeing several games concluded, I ventured to interpose, and said: “Now, men, suppose you and I have a chat together,” pulling out a pocket-Bible as I spoke. Instantly the hatch was cleared, and to a man they scampered off to the starboard bulwark, as though a special interest had been suddenly born in a Peninsular and Oriental steamship which had been slowly making upon us all the day. I was left alone, the interest of the men being apparently riveted on a ship which they had seen many times during the day. The situation was not assuring; I felt dreadfully embarrassed and disheartened. Sitting down, however, on a camp-stool, and opening my Bible, I waited. By and by the *bo’s’n’s* mate, by nickname, “Sandy”—a young fellow always the leader in anything daring or mischievous, and yet withal an honest, manly fellow—came, or rather “sidled” toward me, as though rather ashamed of himself. His example was quickly followed by two or three others. Noticing that those who came had put out their pipes, and fancying that this might be a