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From Guardsman to Missioner

[The London (England) 'Christian Age' gives the following account of the life and work of a man whose name is a household word across the water, and who is also well and favorably known on this side. It is interesting to know that Mr. Lane's brother, Mr. F. T. Lane, is now, and has been for the past twelve or fif-

He was born at Farnborough, in Kent, about fifty years ago. As a young fellow he fell into careless ways, and gave no heed to spiritual matters. When seventeen years of age, he became a Volunteer, which was the means of his ultimately entering the army. The drill instructor of the corps was an old Coldstream Guardsman, and so interested the young Volunteer in this particular regiment that when he

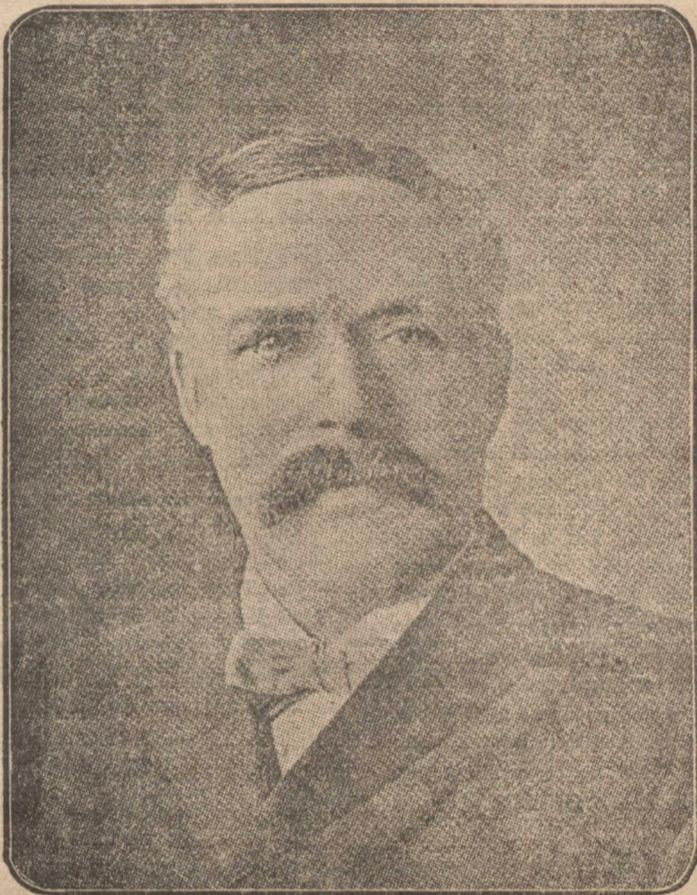
and upbraided and mocked him mercilessly, but the young soldier of Christ stuck bravely to his colors. Often when kneeling on the cold barrack-room floor in prayer, pieces of hard bread and other missiles were hurled at him. Yet his testimony did not end here, for within three months of his conversion about forty soldiers at Windsor had come out and openly confessed Christ, and the young private became an active worker on the side of the Gospel as long as he remained in the Army. He had been a soldier only four and a half years when he purchased his discharge, and had risen to the rank of corporal.

Making his headquarters in London for the next ten years, he actively identified himself with the Union Hall Mission, and labored in the difficult district of Paddington and Kensal Town, which, at that time, contained many squalid slums. Mr. Lane met the late D. L. Moody on his last visit to England, and at the request of the famous evangelist, visited America during the year of the World's Fair in Chicago, to give Bible reading to the students at the Chicago Training Institute. Mr. Lane also conducted successful missions in the States and Canada.

For a number of years Mr. Lane was actively identified with the work of the Y.M.C.A., the veteran president of which, Sir George Williams, was also treasurer of the private council with which Mr. Lane was connected at that time. Other members of this council included Lord Kinnaird, the Rev. F. B. Meyer, Dr. Munro Gibson, and other influential Free Churchmen. The purpose of the Council was to relieve Mr. Lane from anxiety in financial matters, and to give him the support that his work merited.

Then came the appointment to the Free Church Council in 1898. Since then Mr. Lane, along with his colleagues, Gipsy Smith and the Rev. J. Tolefree Parr, has had a most successful career as a missioner, and has visited nearly every part of England and Wales, his campaigns lasting from one to several weeks. These are in themselves what may be termed miniature revivals. A certain town or village is selected as the centre of the mission, or a church in these districts may apply for Mr. Lane's services for a mission lasting a week or a fortnight. The latter are often fixed up many months ahead, and when once the mission is arranged for, the church which is to be its headquarters begins active preparations. Prayer meetings are held daily, and the whole district becomes full of the expected revival. Then, when the missioner arrives he finds the church in a splendid condition to receive the message, and numerous converts are the result.

The late Dr. Mackennal, a competent judge of men and missions, once paid a very high tribute to Mr. Lane's work as a missioner. The latter had been conducting a mission at Dr. Mackennal's church at Altringham. 'He is a singularly virile evangelist,' wrote Dr. Mackennal. 'With very little sentiment, he makes appeal to the conscience principally, and he is emphatically a reasonable man. He does not attempt to overbear the judgment, or force the will to spasmodic action. He is very happy in his Scripture passages brought in for proofs.'



MR. W. R. LANE, THE WELL-KNOWN EVANGELIST.

teen years, working for the Lord among the heathen in Angola, West Central Africa. In face much like his brother, Mr. F. T. Lane is a 'muscular Christian,' too, and in early life was connected with the London Metropolitan Police force. The two brothers form a striking example of the diverse leading of 'One and the self-same spirit.']

Most of the famous exangels of to-day can look back upon a stirring and interesting career. Gipsy Smith, one of the greatest soul-winners at the present time, was once a seller of clothes-pegs; Josiah Nix was in business at Oxford; Ned Wright was formerly a pugilist, while W. R. Lane, the subject of this sketch, has the unique experience of having been a private soldier in the Coldstream Guards.

To-day, as one of the special missioners of the National Council of Evangelical Free Churches, Mr. W. R. Lane is well-known throughout the country as a successful revivalist. He is particularly noted for his great work among men—one of the best proofs of a successful evangelist. Before describing the methods and scope of Mr. Lane's work, it may be interesting to recall a few details of his romantic life story.

was eighteen, young Lane enlisted as a private in the ranks of the 2nd Coldstream Guards. A fine young fellow, he speedily became very popular with his fellow soldiers, and also fell into some of their evil practices, of which gambling was the chief. Private Lane soon became as keen a gambler as any of them. But 'God moves in a mysterious way,' and his gambling habits were to pave the way for his conversion. Here is the thrilling story of the change. The regiment was stationed at Windsor. One day Lane and some companions were seated round the card-table. He had come to his last copper. Presently a Christian soldier named Bachelor approached the gaming table, and offered the men some cards. They were tickets of admission to a religious meeting. 'Won't you take one, Lane?' asked the soldier. Lane had literally staked his last penny, and exclaimed, 'Well, I may as well have one.'

Private Lane attended the meeting, which was held in old National Schoolroom, and here he was deeply convicted of sin. He entered a room at the back of the hall at the close of the meeting, and, after converse and prayer, there and then gave himself to Christ.

Then came the greatest struggle of his life. The soldiers soon knew of Lane's conversion,