

Weird Tales

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CONTENTS FOR MARCH, 1933

Number 3

Cover Design	M. Brundage	
<i>Illustrating a scene in "The Thing in the Fog"</i>		
The Thing in the Fog	Seabury Quinn	275
<i>A goose-flesh werewolf novellette, replete with chills and shudders</i>		
The Tower of the Elephant	Robert E. Howard	306
<i>A strange, blood-freezing story of an idol that wept on its throne</i>		
Germes of Death	Harold Ward	323
<i>A sensational story about an aged Chinaman who kidnapped a human soul</i>		
Buccaneers of Venus (part 5)	Otis Adelbert Kline	335
<i>A novel of breath-taking adventures amid the eery perils of another planet</i>		
The Devil's Tower	Arlton Eadie	353
<i>A startling tale of the Tower of London, haunted by ghosts of dead conspirators</i>		
The Isle of the Torturers	Clark Ashton Smith	362
<i>A powerful story of terrific torments, and the onslaught of the Silver Death</i>		
Akkar's Moth	Paul Ernst	373
<i>An eery tale of the horrible thing that happened to Blaine Richardson</i>		
The Letter	S. Gordon Gurwit	386
<i>An eldritch story of weird surgery—and a head that talked</i>		
In Memoriam:		
Henry St. Clair Whitehead		391
The Eyrle		392
<i>A chat with the readers</i>		
A Witch Passes	M. C. Bodkin	396
<i>Versa</i>		
The Look	Maurice Level	397
<i>The dark shadow of a dead man came between the doctor and his wife</i>		

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FARNSWORTH WRIGHT, Editor.

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In Memoriam

HENRY ST. CLAIR WHITEHEAD

READERS of WEIRD TALES will be grieved to hear of the death of that distinguished author, the Reverend Henry S. Whitehead, Ph. D., who was a regular contributor to this magazine. His death was caused by a painful gastric illness of more than two years' duration.

Doctor Whitehead, descended paternally from an old Virginian family and maternally from a noted line of Scottish West Indian planters, was born in 1882 in Elizabeth, New Jersey. As a boy he attended the Berkeley School in New York City, and in 1904 was graduated from Harvard University, a classmate of President-elect Franklin D. Roosevelt. Studying under men like Santayana and Münsterberg, he later took his degree as Doctor of Philosophy. His first literary work was published in 1905, and from that time forward he was an increasingly well-known writer in many fields.

In 1912, having graduated from the Berkeley Divinity School, Doctor Whitehead was ordained a deacon of the Episcopal Church; and was advanced to the priesthood in 1913. From 1913 to 1917 he was rector of Christ Church in Middletown, Connecticut, and was later children's pastor at St. Mary the Virgin's in New York City. During 1919-23 he was senior assistant at the Church of the Advent in Boston, and in 1923-5 was rector of Trinity Church at Bridgeport, Connecticut. Subsequently Doctor Whitehead served as acting archdeacon in the Virgin Islands, where he had previously served several winters in a similar capacity.

As an author Doctor Whitehead specialized in fiction, though writing much on ecclesiastical and other subjects. Beginning in 1923, when his story, *The Intarsia Box* (in *Adventure*), received a first-class rating as a story of distinction from the O. Henry Memorial Committee, many similar honors were accorded his work. In 1927 he contributed to the *Free Lance Writers' Handbook* an article on the technique of weird fiction which is still a standard text on the subject.

It is for weird fiction of a subtle, realistic and quietly potent sort that he will be best remembered by readers of this magazine, in which twenty-five of his greatest tales have been published. Deeply versed in the somber folklore of the West Indies, and of the Virgin Islands in particular, he caught the inmost spirit of the native superstitions and wrote them into tales whose accurate local background created an astonishing illusion of genuineness. His "jumbee" stories—popularly so-called because of their frequent inclusion of a typical Virgin Island belief—form a permanent contribution to spectral literature, while his recurrent central character and narrator, "Gerald Canevin" (embodying much of his own personality), will always be recalled as a life-like and lovable figure.

Prominent among Doctor Whitehead's tales are *Sea Change*, *Jumbee*, *The Tree Man*, *Black Tancrede*, *Hill Drums*, and *Passing of a God*—the latter perhaps representing the peak of his creative genius.