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## The Song of Hollands, an Inedited Tale Ascribed to Poe

By JOHN E. ENGLEKIRK, JR.

IN MY search for Spanish translations and criticisms of Poe, I ran across an anonymous rendering of what was claimed to be one of his tales, as yet inedited. I discovered the article in *La América*,<sup>1</sup> an important magazine of long standing (1857-1888) as far as Spanish political periodicals of that period, and, in fact, of any period, are concerned. *La América* was a bi-monthly review of politics and literature, dedicated to the interests of both Spain and her rapidly dwindling colonial empire.

I shall give the English version of the article retaining as far as possible whatever Poesque elements it may contain. It is entitled, "*The Song of Hollands. An inedited tale. Edgardo Poe.*"

The preliminary comments are brief and interesting: "A foreign newspaper publishes the following inedited tale of the author of *Historias extraordinarias*. Without our determining its authenticity, we offer our readers a free translation of same."

And the story follows:

For nearly six thousand years man has been advancing through the unknown. That which has been discovered is nothing in comparison to that which remains to be discovered, and to that which never will be discovered. The imagination is astonished in the face of certain problems which neither algebra, trigonometry, nor medicine have solved.

In this category we find the case of Mr. J. S. T. Hollands, who died in Baltimore a year ago. Let no one accuse me of inventing the facts I am about to give. Having been an actual witness to the case, I shall never forget them,

1. 8 de Octubre de 1883, Año xxiv, No. 19, p. 15.

should I live a hundred years. I cannot remember where I made the acquaintance of J. S. T. Hollands. It is possible that I met him in Boston, in the Tomahawk Hotel, where I used to put up quite frequently. J. S. T. Hollands was a poor specimen of a man (*pobre diablo*), six feet tall, of average intelligence and *extremely nervous*. At that time he was writing poor verse that he sent regularly to the newspapers without ever succeeding in having it accepted. At any rate, the *fact* remains that I met him in *Baltimore* last June. He was living in Union's Hotel, *just across from the house in which I was born*. I ran across him in the street; but he seemed so preoccupied that he did not recognize me. He had changed a great deal. He was so very thin that he looked like a skeleton; big bluish rings encircled his eyes. I resolved to see him but he had become as unsociable a being as an Irishman after drinking. I went many times to his hotel and was as often and consistently told that he wasn't in. The servant, charged with conveying me his unamiable replies, gave me some details of this peculiar man's life.

J. S. T. Hollands hardly ever left his room; complained continually of lively pains in his chest and refused to be examined by a doctor. From time to time he played the violin, but he would always play the same melody. Two or three times he had sung the same song, incoherently, in which he would mention empty heart, *gnawing worm*, and *mourning bells*. The servant was of the opinion that J. S. T. Hollands had had some love affair in Boston that had unsettled his mind.

I had almost forgotten J. S. T. Hollands when a week later I met the same servant.

"That mad man with his violin is very ill," he told me. "Come and see him since you're a doctor."

I followed him, and the proprietor of the Union's Hotel ushered me, without delay into the sick man's room. He was stretched out in bed; he recognized no one, and on his face were all the *marked* indications of a very *confirmed*

## THE SONG OF HOLLANDS [249]

stage of *phthisis*. An idea flashed through my mind. It was *two years* since I had busied myself with *mesmerism*, by which I had seen obtained—and through my own experiments—very surprising results. *I immediately began to wave magnetic passes over the head and chest of the dying man, who, with the first stroke of my hand across his forehead, experienced a violent jerk, but nothing further developed, in spite of my magnetic powers, until a quarter of an hour later. His pulse was almost imperceptible.*

“Mr. Hollands,” I asked, “are you asleep?”

“Yes,” he replied. “No, no, not enough!”

I made new passes over his head and chest and again asked him whether he was asleep.

“Yes,” he replied in a strident voice, his teeth clicking in a convulsive tremor.

“Where are you?”

“In Boston, in Summers Street, in the house of . . . . oh, please don’t force me to say that name!”

I concentrated all of my will and commanded him to tell me the name.

“Laura L. . . . .!” he exclaimed in a doleful voice. “Wake me up!”

Hollands’ features were so distorted that, believing it imprudent to insist further on this point, I asked him, “Where does it hurt you?”

The dying man lifted himself up in bed, resting on his left arm, and clutching convulsively at his heart with his right hand, hummed an incoherent song which his feeble voice accentuated, resulting in decided expressions of grief. The ideas contained in the bad verse of this strange song were as follows:

“I felt that my heart was breaking,  
The night you kissed me for the last time;  
And like a worm eating its way into a fruit,  
I felt that love entering me,  
That love that gnaws and kills.”

"Why that's his song!" exclaimed his servant. Hollands continued:

"Love has penetrated my heart  
And devoured it completely.  
Greedy love!  
Later like a needy soul without bread,  
It died of hunger in my empty heart.  
Her corpse, rigid and cold,  
In cadent palpitations  
Beats against the red wall of my dead heart.  
And I dare not move  
For I hear it sound the *death-knell*  
At my slightest change."

J. S. T. Hollands ended his weird song in a deep sigh and fell back breathless on the bed. I awoke him and he recognized me.

"Get out of here! I'm not crazy! I'm not crazy!"

I left the hotel sadly impressed:

That night I met one of my friends from Boston, of whom I made inquiries about Laura L. . . . He told me she was a woman of questionable life whom Hollands was to have married; that at that very time she entertained relations with a certain Van S. . . . , a merchant from Amberes, located in Boston.

The following day, Saturday, I returned to the hotel at nine-thirty in the evening. Everyone was upset. Hollands was in his last agony. When I entered the room there was scarcely a breath of life left in him. I gave him several magnetic passes, and the dying man, at first calm, jumped abruptly from the bed without anyone daring to stop him, and in a voice that could apparently be heard at a great distance, sang in the same tune as the day before, the following verses:

"Today for her for whom with double force,  
*Tolls the bell of agony*  
In her heart destroyed by blows  
The sound is going to cease.  
Pray all of you for her

For the woman about to die,  
For the woman who is going to die."

The instant he finished the last verse, Mr. Hollands fell back lifeless on his back. He was dead. That very moment the clock in the neighboring tower struck ten.

The following day I was present at the burial. Two days later I received a copy of a newspaper from Boston. Fatally, and by an operation independent of my will, my eyes were drawn to the following paragraph:

"A terrible crime has scattered fear among all the inhabitants of Summers Street. Details are wanting. All that we have verified is that the victim's name is Laura . . . ; that jealousy has been the motive of the crime and that the assassination took place at exactly ten p. m."

EDGARDO POE.

A casual reader of the tale immediately recognizes many elements in it that are certainly indicative of Poe. But a careful study of the story as to its technique and the time of its appearance evinces a doubt as to its authenticity. It is most unlikely that a tale by Poe should have been left undiscovered until 1883—and then, remain unknown in this country. Woodberry quotes several letters from Carey & Lea, the publishers, to Poe, in which reference is made to a tale that was astray on Feb. 20 and Nov. 29, 1836.<sup>2</sup> But Dr. Thomas Ollive Mabbott feels sure that this tale was recovered from the MS. or from Poe's own memory later. The only tale known to be Poe's that he did not publish is unfinished. The only tales added to the accepted canon of Poe's works since *Griswold* (1st edition 4 vols. 1850-1856) are *Julius Rodman*, *The Elk*, and the unfinished bit called *The Lighthouse*.<sup>3</sup> A story called *The Doom* has been ascribed to Poe, but Prof. Campbell is un-

2. *Life of Edgar Allan Poe*, Boston, 1909, ii, p. 375. Woodberry's discussion of this reference to the lost tale follows at ii, 402.

3. For *The Lighthouse*, see Woodberry's *Life of Poe*, ii, 397-399.

willing to accept it.<sup>4</sup> *The Ghost of a Grey Tadpole* is a hoax by Dr. English.<sup>5</sup> I am inclined to believe that we have to deal with a similar case, a hoax, and I shall attempt to prove it to be such, and suggest its probable author.

Let us first examine the tale as to its style and technique. Of course, after any literary product has been converted from one language to another—and a *free translation* at that—and then back again into the original, one may venture to assert that the creator himself might be at a loss to identify his own work from that angle. But we have in this case, certain almost unmistakable signs that indicate the work of not Poe himself but of one aspiring to and not fully comprehending the master's technique.

This tale contains many characteristics that are undeniably Poe's. The use of general and non-committal scientific terms, the assurance and gravity with which the incredible is approached and treated, the detached, impartial, and mechanical precision and regularity in which the tale is worked out, the employment of the first person, are constituent elements in Poe's art. But it would seem that our anonymous author failed to grasp one of the outstanding characteristics of Poe's genius—the impersonality of his tales. Poe systematically isolated the facts of his works from the facts of his individual existence. With the exception of several transpositions, the recalling of pleasant school days in England, as in *William Wilson*, we find scarcely a single trace of biographical events.<sup>6</sup> I believe

4. *The Doom* appears in *Southern Literary Messenger*, 1, 235 (January, 1835). See Killis Campbell, *The Poe Canon*, in PMLA, xxvi, 325f (1912) for a discussion of the evidence, much of it negative, in this case, and an article by the same writer in *Modern Language Notes* for May, 1917 (xxxii, 270f) on "A Dream" in the *Saturday Evening Post*, May 13, 1831. Prof. Mabbott writes me that complete acceptance or rejection is hardly possible at present in his opinion.

5. A hoax attributed to Poe entitled "The Ghost of a Grey Tadpole," was apparently by Dr. Thomas Dunn English. What is known of this piece is synopsised by Professor Mabbott in an article, "Poe and the Philadelphia Irish Citizen," in *The Journal of the American Irish Historical Society*, 1930-31, XXIX, 121-131, where the tale (first discovered by Prof. Killis Campbell) is reprinted.

6. Our author may have been further influenced in his use of biographical data and references from the reading of the following short passages from Griswold:

that our would-be Poe, in an endeavor to follow what he believed to be Poe's method, and thereby make his tale appear more authentic, *purposely* interpolated certain facts and made specific mention of certain places and data that we immediately associate with events in Poe's life. I am of the opinion that when the translator wrote, "he was living in Union's Hotel, just across from the house where I was born," he felt he was strengthening his story by the addition of facts. But certain biographical data on Poe have changed since Griswold's time, and we know that Poe was not born in Baltimore, but in Boston. If we assume then that our writer purposely gave us this fact to add credence to his tale, we have positive proof that he had recourse to Griswold for his knowledge of Poe—or more particularly—to Baudelaire, whose translations and biography of Poe were based on Griswold's work. I say definitely from Baudelaire, or the French, because in his preliminary remarks he has called Poe "the author of the *Historias extraordinarias*, and Baudelaire so rendered for the continent Poe's title, *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque*. If then, we know that for facts on Poe's life he borrowed from the French, based on Griswold, may we not inversely assume that he purposely borrowed this particular fact to strengthen the likelihood of the tale?

Poe seldom introduced verse into his tales. And never in his scientific ones. The outstanding cases are, however, very effective. *Ligeia* contains *The Conqueror Worm*—and this poem is a favorite one in Spanish translation, as are

"Nearly all that he wrote in the last two or three years—including much of his best poetry—was in some sense biographical, in draperies of his imagination, those who take the trouble to trace his steps, will perceive but slightly concealed, the figure of himself."

"While we read the pages of the '*Fall of the House of Usher*' or of '*Mesmeric Revelations*,' we see in the solemn and stately gloom which invests one and in the subtle metaphysical analysis of both, indications of the idiosyncracies of what was most remarkable and peculiar in the author's intellectual nature."



*The Raven* and *The Bells*.<sup>7</sup> Again may we not assume that our author *purposely* interpolates verse in imitation of Poe, employing such poetical images as would remind one immediately of some of Poe's most popular and most characteristic poems? And so he sings of love as *The Conqueror Worm* of the heart! For Laura "tolls the bell of agony," and Hollands hears the death-knell, the translation for the Spanish "toque de agonía," reminiscent of the "moaning and the groaning of the iron bells."

One cannot deny that there seems to be something forced and purposeful as to these elements in the story and as to the technique of presenting a subject that could unquestionably be Poe's.

Let us now assume that our translator actually did discover, as he says, an *inedited* tale of Poe in a foreign newspaper. Let us first examine the word *inedited* in its continental use. The word seems to be used rather loosely. Inedited material seems to be material either unknown, little known, or never before translated or collected. Such seems to be the rather ambiguous use of the word in the following announcement in the *Gaceta Literaria* for May, 1863: "Literature—*Contes inedites d'Edgar Poe*, translated by W. Hughes.—Everyone is acquainted with the *Historias extraordinarias* of this peculiar writer. His weird creations belong neither to the real, nor the fantastic world; they seem, more than anything else, the visions of a feverish dream, with their wavering forms, their shadowy and vague expressions, and their mournful reflections. *The new tales are as good as the old* and if they do not add to the American novelist's fame, they will complete the strange and almost savage aspect of his literary physiognomy."

I have previously stated that only three tales have been added to the canon since Griswold (1856)—*and these do not*

7. *The Assignment* contains *To One in Paradise*; *The Fall of the House of Usher* contains *The Haunted Palace*. In every case save *The Assignment* the poem appeared first separately. But there are bits of verse in *Four Beasts in One* and in some humorous tales.

*merit translation.* Therefore, inedited tales in this instance could not mean tales that up to that time were unknown to Poe's publishers. Baudelaire had already published his *Histoires extraordinaires* (1856), *Nouvelles histoires extraordinaires* (1856), *Aventures d'Albert Gordon Pym* (1856), and *Eureka* (1862). His *Histoires grotesques et sérieuses* appeared in 1865. But it need not necessarily mean that *The Song of Hollands* was then published for the first time, but rather, that it made its first public appearance in the French press.

Poe entered Spanish literature almost exclusively from the French. Could it be that our author did discover a so-called *inedited French version* of a tale of Poe? Is it possible that this tale underwent a change in the French press, a change somewhat similar, although certainly more drastic than the ones Poe describes in his *Marginalia*.<sup>8</sup> He writes, "One of the happiest examples, in a small way, of the carrying-in-a-basket logic, is to be found in a London weekly paper, called 'The Popular Record of Modern Science; a journal of Philosophy and General Information.' This work has a vast circulation, and is respected by eminent men. Sometime in November, 1845, it copied from the *Columbian Magazine*, of New York, a rather adventurous article of mine, called 'Mesmeric Revelation.' It had the impudence, also, to spoil the title by improving it to 'The Last Conversation of a Somnambule'—a phrase that is nothing at all to the purpose, since the person who 'converses' is not a somnambule. He is a sleep-waker—not a sleep-walker; but I presume that *The Record* thought it was only the difference of an 'l.' What I chiefly complain of, however, is that the London editor prefaced my paper with these words:—'The following is an article communicated to the *Columbian Magazine*, a journal of respectability and influence in the United States by Mr. Edgar A. Poe. It bears internal evidence of authenticity!—But to *The*

8. This note first appeared in *Graham's Magazine*, March, 1848 (xxxii, 178)

*Record*; on the issue of my 'Valdemar Case,' this journal copies it, as a matter of course, and (also as a matter of course) *improves the title*, as in the previous instance." Is it possible, then, that *The Song of Hollands* first appeared in the French as a version, certainly distorted beyond recognition!—, of one of these English 'misnomers' and called inedited, therefore, because of the change in name that had already rendered it less familiar? I think not. Nor do I believe it to be hoax that originated in the French press.<sup>9</sup>

However, I am convinced that it is a hoax of our anonymous Spanish author, the product of a keen interest in Poe's *Mesmeric Revelation* and *The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar* at a time when, or several years subsequent to, a veritable Poeish cult was influencing Spanish literature.

Let us trace briefly the history of these two tales in Spanish translation. I shall confine myself to their appearance in the magazines. In the very column of *La América*, in September and October of 1858, there appeared two of Poe's tales—taken from Baudelaire. They were *Sombra-Shadow*, and *Revelación Magnética—Mesmeric Revelation*. At the same time *El Mundo Pintoresco* announced the immediate translation of several of Poe's tales and among them we find *Visiones Magnéticas*.<sup>10</sup> In the same review for June, 1860, we find a direct (?) rendering from the English of *La verdad de lo que pasó en casa*<sup>11</sup> de Mr.<sup>12</sup> Valdemar. The

9. We may recall at this point that in both the French and Spanish press certain of Poe's tales appeared under different titles as steals. Shortly after the French journal, *La Commerce*, had given a feuilleton in which *The Murders of the Rue Morgue* appeared in translation, a writer for *La Quotidienne* served it for that paper under the title of *L'Orang-Otang*. *La Quotidienne* was accused of plagiarism and during the legal investigation that followed, it was proved to the satisfaction of the tribunal that the tale *had been stolen entirely* from Poe. (See Griswold's *Memoir*).

In *El Museo Universal* for Feb. 15, 1857, Poe made his first known Spanish appearance in an anonymous translation of his *Three Sundays in a Week*. (See Ferguson, John De Lancey, *American Literature in Spain*, N. Y., 1916, p. 56.)

10. It is interesting to note the various renderings of the title of the same tale. One easily understands how anything may be possible as to change in style, technique, and even subject matter after several re-renderings.

11. Either a typographical error or mistranslation of the English word "case."

12. Note also the rendering of *M. Valdemar* as *Mr. Valdemar*.

feuilleton of *Las Novedades* published *La verdad acerca del caso de Mr. Valdemar* in August, 1860 (from the French). Many editions of Poe's stories, containing these two tales, and several *imitations* of some of the most popular ones as *The Black Cat* and *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* are scattered through this period. Alarcon writes his *Cuentos inverosímiles*. Ros de Olano and many others have taken to the short story a la Poe. So much so that P. Yago, in *La América* of February, 1871, criticizes the development and trends of the Spanish novel as follows: "Today the likelihood of the plot really matters little; whether it is more or less complicated is also of minor importance; today the critics, or rather, today the *public* looks for the truth in the logical development of the events, however incredible they in themselves may be. Today the truth of the plot is judged with relation to the details; today for form, for the technique of presenting the plot and of giving it the appearance of truth, veritable 'tours de force' are employed. It is a kind of intellectual gymnastics, in which for a Balzac we find a Karr, and for a Karr an Edgar Poe."

The Spanish public demands the "original and daring literature" of the "celebrated and unfortunate Angloamerican writer." Poe's creations occur repeatedly in criticisms as peculiarly applicable to describing unbelievable, horrible, and weird effects as when Juan Valera, in a review of the theatre, likens a dramatic groan "to the hollow aye, to the cough of a consumptive, and to the stertorian voice of the magnetized dead man whom Edgar Poe paints for us in one of his most gruesome legends."<sup>12</sup>

We see how popular Poe's *Mesmeric Revelation* and *The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar* were in this period. But for over twenty years (1860-1883) we find no magazine versions of these tales; and then in *La América* appears what is purported to be an inedited tale of Poe. It is undeniably a hoax based on these two popular stories, appear-

12. *La Razón, Revista dramática, Tomo II—1861.*

ing at a time when its similarity to the above-mentioned tales might not raise the question of its authenticity.

But does our anonymous "forger" mean the authenticity of the *tale* as a *work* of Poe or does he mean the authenticity of the *facts* in the *case*—"The internal evidence of authenticity" about which Poe complained?<sup>14</sup> It is obviously but another ruse on his part to dupe and interest his readers, and appears, most certainly, as the work of one who has been absorbed in the reading and study of Poe.

It is hardly necessary to dwell long on the similarities between this tale and those of Poe's. Poe begins both tales by saying that he will but give the facts "even in the teeth of a world of prejudice"; that he will "detail without comment" upon what he is about to relate. In both stories we find that the person to be mesmerized is a confirmed consumptive. Poe says of Vankirk in *Mesmeric Revelations*: "For many months he had been laboring under *confirmed phthisis*. . ." and of Valdemar: "For some months previous to my becoming acquainted with him, his physicians had declared him in a confirmed phthisis." To be a "good subject for mesmeric experiment" the victim must not only be a confirmed consumptive but also "markedly nervous." Poe tells us in *The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar* that "his attention, for the last *three* years, had been repeatedly drawn to the subject of mesmerism." And so, our alleged Poe, upon seeing Hollands' mental and physical condition, as a subject most suitable for mesmeric experiments, suddenly decides to prove the superiority of mind over matter through the mesmeric art.

May I digress here for a moment to indicate another probable source of our hoax. I have already mentioned *Ligeia* as having suggested to the creator of this tale the feasibility of introducing verse into his story. The similarity of phenomena that occur in both *Ligeia* and in *The Song of Hollands* is striking. Maclair, in speaking of

14. See Page 255.

*Ligeia*, says, "The synchrony of time and of consciences may occasion, according to the secret thought of Poe, horrible efforts he has symbolized them in the struggle of *Ligeia* who, to live again and to replace her rival of whom she is jealous, succeeds in reincarnating herself, poisoning her and taking her place in the coffin."<sup>15</sup> Is not our author trying to bring out this synchrony of time and thought, this unitary system of Poe in which all matter is reduced to an Idea, and show that the mind, when set free through mesmerism, may pierce time and space and reveal happenings beyond the power and comprehension of the physical organs?

In proving the superiority of mind over matter, our fictitious Poe incidentally proves the veracity of Poe's statements, as set forth in *Mesmeric Revelation*, as to the general features of the laws of mesmerism: "that man, by mere exercise of will, can so impress his fellow, as to cast him into an abnormal condition,—that, while in this state, the person so impressed employs only with effort, and then feebly, the external organs of sense, yet perceives, with keenly refined perception and through channels supposed unknown, matters beyond the scope of the physical organs;—that, moreover, his intellectual faculties are wonderfully exalted and invigorated; that his sympathies with the person so impressing him are profound (note the decided change in *Hollands* when under the spell of mesmerism!); and, finally, that his susceptibility to the impression increases with its frequency (*Hollands* never having been mesmerized as *Vankirk* in *Mesmeric Revelation* was in the habit of being, is quite as difficult a case as *Valdemar*, and it is only through repeated passes, and after some delay, that he finally yields to the mesmeric influence), while, in the same proportion, the peculiar phenomena elicited are more extended and more pronounced. (It is only through the concentration of all of the mesmerist's will that Höl-

15. Maclair, *Le Génie d'Edgar Poe*, p. 225.

lands is forced to yield to his interlocutor and confess the name of Laura L. . . .)"

The technique employed in the case of Hollands is almost verbatim that of Poe over Valdemar. If the reader will note the italicized words in the tale where Hollands is being cast under a mesmeric spell,<sup>16</sup> and then compare them with the following lines that explain Poe's method of mesmerizing Valdemar, he will be amazed at the wholesale transposition of most of Poe's technique: "*I commenced the passes which I had already found most effectual in subduing him. He was evidently influenced with the first lateral stroke of my hand across his forehead; but although I exerted all my powers, no further perceptible effect was induced until after ten o'clock (Hollands' fateful hour!)—By this time his pulse was imperceptible and his breathing stertorous, and at intervals of half a minute. This condition was nearly unaltered for a quarter of an hour.*"

The ending of the alleged Poe tale is most convincing—abrupt, positive, to the point, and impersonal.

There remains little doubt but that the anonymous creator of this inedited tale attempted to set forth certain principles that Poe exposes in *Mesmeric Revelation* and in *Ligea*, through the application of the "general features of the laws of mesmerism" and through a special case, the facts of which are remarkably similar to the *The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar*.

Whatever his motives may have been for the concocting of *The Song of Hollands*, we are not at a loss to find the fount from which the idea of such a hoax undoubtedly sprung. It is to be found in the opening paragraphs of *The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar*: "Of course, I shall not pretend to consider it any matter for wonder, that the extraordinary case of M. Valdemar has excited discussion. It would have been a miracle had it not—especially under the

16. See page 249.

circumstances. Through the desire of all persons concerned, to keep the affair from the public, at least for the present, or until we had further opportunities for investigation—through our endeavor to affect this—a *garbled or exaggerated account made its way into society, and became the source of many unpleasant misrepresentations; and, very naturally, of a great deal of disbelief.*"

Should there still be some doubt as to our conclusion that *The Song of Hollands* is but a hoax, let us examine an article that appeared in the very next issue of the same magazine—*La América* of October 28, 1883. I feel sure that we can prove most convincingly that it is not a tale of Poe, and this done, we will have unearthed the anonymous forger himself.

The article is entitled *A Dream of Edgar Poe*, and was submitted by Aurélien Scholl. The author begins his story by telling us briefly of Poe's trip to Greece and to St. Petersburg, and of how, finally, he finds himself for two days in Paris, where the following event occurs. He tells us of a dream that Poe had as he slept in a "cheese-store," the eve of his departure for America, a dream in which Poe listens to various discussions by preachers and orators as they harangue the people who inhabit the world of cheese, about the universe, fate, immortality of the soul, politics, and nobility.

The following day, in the milkshop where he is breakfasting, Poe enters into a discussion with a young clergyman on the subject of man's will, and the incompatibility of a belief in the freedom of human actions and a belief in the universal and all-powerful soul. The young clergyman and Poe bring their conversation to an end as follows:

"I maintain then," says Poe, "*that materialism is the only doctrine compatible with a belief in an omnipresent God, a universal and eternal soul.*"

"Without convincing me, your argument has surprised and interested me."



Poe arose.

"Are you leaving, sir?"

"Probably never to return."

"And where are you going?"

"To America, where I was born."

"May I know your name?"

"Edgar Allan Poe, mathematician!"

"Bon voyage, sir."

"But now that you know my name, I would be greatly pleased to know yours."

"I am the Abbe Lamennais."

There are several elements in this article by Scholl that lead one to believe that he is the perpetrator of the hoax that appeared in the preceding issue of *La América*.

It is evident that Scholl referred to Baudelaire or Griswold for facts on Poe's life. It is Griswold who tells us that Poe "soon after left the country with the Quixotic intention of joining the Greeks, then in the midst of their struggle with the Turks. He never reached his destination, and we know but little of his adventures in Europe for nearly a year. By the end of this time he had made his way to St. Petersburg, and our Minister in that capital, the late Mr. Henry Middleton, of South Carolina, was summoned one morning to save him from penalties incurred in a drunken debauch. Through Mr. Middleton's kindness, he was set at liberty and enabled to return to this country."<sup>17</sup>

But later biographers have disproved the details of the above account of Poe's wanderings in Europe, just as they have corrected Griswold's statement as to the date and birthplace of Poe!

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17. Griswold says nothing of Poe's visit to France. However, if we look in the latest edition of Espasa-Calpe's *Enciclopedia Universal Ilustrada* we find the following in the article on Poe: "Upon returning to France he (Poe) took to bed badly wounded, being cared for by a Scotch lady, who gave him the means to return to America after an absence of eighteen months."

There is a fairly widespread tradition that Poe visited France, but no convincing evidence. See, for example, *Notes and Queries*, Dec. 28, 1929. The visit seems to be one of the events that ought to have happened, but no one has shown that it did!

Is it a mere coincidence that both the author of *The Song of Hollands* and the author of *A Dream of Edgar Poe* should have had occasion to make use of biographical data on Poe for their tales? I believe not. I feel sure that Scholl had a deep interest in Poe, the man, and that he had been attracted to him by many incidents in his life, as told by Griswold. Poe's genius not only as a short story writer and a poet, but also as one interested in science and philosophy, appealed to our Spanish author. Poe's varied life spent now in Boston, now in Baltimore, now in England, and again in Greece and Russia, added greatly to Scholl's appreciation of Poe. Is it any wonder, then, that he should have seized every possible opportunity to give his readers as complete a portrait of Poe as his keen sympathy with the American must have urged him to do?

The discussion that takes place between Poe and Lamennais is but Scholl's version of the conversation that ensued between Vankirk and Poe in *Mesmeric Revelation*. The theme that "materialism is the only doctrine compatible with a belief in an omnipresent God, a universal and eternal soul," is also the subject of discussion in Poe's story. Let us examine Poe's tale a moment to assure ourselves of this similarity in the argument of both stories. I shall give several excerpts that will indicate this clearly.

Poe asks Vankirk, "Is not God immaterial?"

And Vankirk replies, "There is no immateriality—it is a mere word. That which is not matter, is not at all—unless qualities are things.

P. "Is God, then, Material?"

V. "No." (This reply startled me very much).

P. "What, then, is he?"

V. (After a long pause, and mutteringly). "I see—but it is a thing difficult to tell.—He is not spirit, for he exists. Nor is he matter, as you understand it.—The ultimate, or unparticled matter but impels all things—and thus is all things within itself. *This matter is God.* What men

attempt to embody in the word 'thought' is this matter in motion."

P. "But in all this—in this identification of mere matter with God—is there nothing of irreverence?"

V. "Can you say why matter should be less revered than mind?—*God, with all the powers attributed to spirit, is but the perfection of matter.*"

The very fact that both *The Song of Hollands* and the article by Scholl should be based, in the main, on Poe's *Mesmeric Revelation*, is a revelation in itself. The problems that Poe sets forth in *Ligeia*, *Mesmeric Revelation*, and *The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar* find their counterparts in *The Song of Hollands* and in the article by Scholl. It would seem that by the application of a simple algebraic equation, no possible doubt could remain as to the unknown quantity—*anonymous*.

Is it not strange, then, that almost twenty years after Poe's last appearance in Spanish magazines, there should suddenly appear two articles in successive issues of the same review, one purported to be anonymous translation of an inedited tale by Poe, and the other a tale about Poe? And more wonderful still that both articles should have so much in common! I believe that Scholl forged the tale *The Song of Hollands*, not only because a keen interest in Poe, and especially in his tales *Mesmeric Revelation* and *The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar*, had to find expression in some way, but also because he wished to arouse and prepare his readers for his own article that was to appear in the following issue signed with his name! He felt that his tale, if attributed to the author of *Historias extraordinarias* would be readily devoured by the reading public. The fact that he claimed it to be an inedited tale by Poe not only served to arouse an interest in the tale, and in its authenticity, but also necessitated that its translator remain unknown. The ground was thus well prepared. And I am almost certain that the readers of *La América* awaited

with as much anxiety the next issue of the magazine for another possible tale by Poe as I, with enthusiasm, searched its columns to find a possible explanation of the anonymously-translated, inedited tale by Poe—*The Song of Hollands*.

But is not the author of *A Dream of Edgar Poe* and of *The Song of Hollands* the Aurélien Scholl of French literature? Unquestionably so! The article is signed Aurélien and not Aureliano Scholl! Aurélien Scholl (1833-1912) was a French short story writer, novelist, journalist, dramatist, and critic. He was most successful in journalism, contributing many articles to some of the leading Parisian newspapers as *Le Corsaire, Paris, Le Mousquetaire, L'Illustration, Le Rappel, Le Soir, Gil Blas,* and *Le Figaro*, and founding successively *Le Satan, Le Nain Jaune, Le Club, Le Jacky,* and *Le Lorgnon*. He was on the staff of *L'Evenement* from 1872-82; was editor-in-chief of *Le Voltaire* in 1882-1883, and editor of *L'Echo* of Paris from 1883-1885.

Where the two stories by Scholl first appeared in print is hard to say. Did Scholl himself contribute these two articles to *La América*? Are they to be found in the French press, in the files of one of the many newspapers to which Scholl contributed? Were that discovery made, no possible doubt could remain as to the originator of the hoax. But how is one to explain the remarkable coincidence of the appearance of two articles by Scholl, in translation, in successive issues of *La América*, one attributed to Poe but anonymous, and the other on Poe signed by Scholl? A fact that is all the more amazing since this is the first and only translation of Scholl to be found in the files of *La América*. And I may add that I found not a single reference to Scholl in some fifty Spanish reviews covering the period from 1850-1870. The fact that this is the only contribution by Aurélien Scholl in the Spanish press would seem to support further our contention that he is the French journalist and

not a Spanish writer. It would also seem to indicate that Scholl was not a contributor to the Spanish press from which would naturally follow the acceptance of the preliminary remarks to *The Song of Hollands*: "A foreign newspaper publishes the following inedited tale of the author of *Historias extraordinarias*. Without our determining its authenticity, we offer our readers a free translation of same."

## LA CANCIÓN DE HOLLANDS

"Un cuento inédito—Edgardo Poe

Un periódico extranjero publica el siguiente cuento inédito del autor de las *Historias extraordinarias*. Sin constarnos su autenticidad, ofrecemos a nuestros lectores una traducción libre del mismo:

Hace próximamente seis mil años que el hombre avanza a través de lo desconocido. Lo que ha descubierto no es nada en comparación de lo que queda por descubrir y de lo nunca descubrirá. La imaginación se espanta ante ciertos problemas que no resuelven el álgebra, la trigonometría ni la medicina.

En este número se encuentra el caso del señor J. S. T. Hollands, muerto en Baltimore el año último. Que no se me acuse de inventar los hechos que voy a referir. Testigo presencial del caso, no he de olvidarlos aunque viva cien años. No puedo recordar donde hice el conocimiento de J. S. T. Hollands. Es posible que sea en Boston, en el hotel de Tomahawk, donde me hospedaba con frecuencia. J. S. T. Hollands era un pobre diablo de seis pies de estatura, de inteligencia vulgar y extremadamente nervioso. En aquel tiempo pasaba su existencia haciendo malos versos, que presentaba con regularidad a los periódicos, sin lograr su inserción. De todos modos, lo cierto es que en Junio del año último volví a encontrármelo en Baltimore: viví en Union's Hotel, justamente enfrente de la casa en que yo nací. Le

hallé en la calle; pero se había convertido en un ser tan insociable, como un irlandés después de beber; me presenté muchas veces en su hotel, y siempre se me negó sistemáticamente que estuviese en casa. El criado encargado de transmitirme sus poco amables respuestas, me dió detalles de la vida de este hombre singular.

J. S. T. Hollands no salía casi nunca, se quejaba de vivos dolores en el pecho, y se negaba a ser visitado por ningún médico. De cuando en cuando tocaba el violín, pero siempre ejecutaba la misma melodía. Dos o tres veces había cantado al misma canción con letras incoherentes, en que se hablaba de corazón vacío, gusano roedor y toque de agonía. El criado emitió la opinión de que J. S. T. Hollands había tenido en Boston alguna historia de amor que le habría desarreglado el cerebro.

Había ya casi olvidado a J. S. T. Hollands cuando a los ocho días encontré al mismo criado.

—El loco del violín está muy malo,—me dijo;—venid a verle, puesto que sois médico.

Yo le seguí, y el dueño del Union's Hotel me introdujo sin dificultad en el cuarto del enfermo. Éste se hallaba tendido en su lecho; no conocía a nadie; y en su rostro tenía marcados todos los caracteres de la tisis más avanzada. Una idea cruzó por mi mente. Hacía dos años que no me ocupaba en hacer pruebas de magnetismo, de que había visto obtener y obtenido por mí mismo resultados sorprendentes. Inmediatamente comencé a dar pases magnéticos sobre la cabeza y el pecho del moribundo, que en el primer momento, y cuando la acción de mi mano se ejerció sobre su frente, experimentó una fuerte sacudida, que no tuvo otro resultado, a pesar de mi fuerza magnética, hasta que pasó un cuarto de hora. El pulso era casi imperceptible:

—Señor Hollands, le pregunté, ¿dormis?

—Sí, . . . me respondió. ¡No! ¡No es bastante!

Dí nuevos pases sobre su pecho y su cabeza y le pregunté de nuevo si dormía.

—Sí,—me contestó con voz estridente, rechinando los dientes con temblor convulsivo.

—¿Dónde estáis?

—En Boston . . . . en la calle de Summers . . . en casa de . . . ; No me obliguéis a pronunciar este nombre!

Yo reconcentré toda mi voluntad y le ordené que me dijese el nombre.

—¡Laura L. . . . !—exclamó con voz dolorida. ¡Despertadme!

La fisinomía de Hollands estaba de tal manera descompuesta que, creyendo imprudente insistir sobre ese punto, le pregunté:

—¿Dónde os duele?

El moribundo se inclinó en el lecho, apoyándose sobre el brazo izquierdo, y apretando convulsivamente su corazón con la mano derecha, entonó una canción incoherente que con su débil voz acentuaba, dando señaladas muestras de dolor. Las ideas contenidas en el verso incorrecto de su canto especial eran las siguientes:

“Yo sentí que mi corazón se rompía  
La noche en que me dió el último beso,  
Y como un gusano que entra en un fruto  
Sentí introducirse en mí  
El amor que roe y que mata.”

—Toma, pues si es sú canción; exclamó el criado. Hollands continuó:

“El amor ha penetrado en mi corazón  
Y lo ha devorado enteramente  
El amor avio!  
Después como un pobre sin pan;  
Ha muerto de hambre  
En mi corazón vacío.  
Su cadáver helado y rígido  
Golpea con cadenciosos latidos  
La roja pared de mi corazón muerto  
Y no me atrevo a moverme  
Porque le oigo tocar a agonía  
Cuando hago el menor movimiento.”

## THE SONG OF HOLLANDS

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J. S. T. Hollands terminó su extraña canción con un hondo gemido y cayó exánime sobre el lecho. Le desperté y me reconoció

—¡Salid de aquí!—me gritó con furor.—¡No estoy loco . . . . . no estoy loco!

Salí, en efecto, del hotel tristemente impresionado. Por la noche encontré a uno de mis amigos de Boston, a quien pedí noticias de Laura L. . . . Me dijo que era una mujer de costumbres ligeras, con quien Hollands había debido casarse; que en aquellos momentos estaba en relaciones con un tal Van S. . . . comerciante de Amberes, establecido en Boston. Al día siguiente, sábado, volví al hotel a las nueve y media de la noche. Toda la casa estaba en movimiento. Hollands agonizaba. Cuando entré en su cuarto, apenas le quedaba un soplo de vida. Le dí algunos pases magnéticos, y el moribundo, a principio tranquilo, salto bruscamente del lecho sin que nadie osara detenerle, y con una voz que parecía escucharse a gran distancia, cantó, con la misma música que el día anterior, los versos siguientes: Hoy por ella—Por quien, con doble fuerza, suena la campana de la agonía.—En su corazón destrozado por los golpes.—Va a cesar el sonido. . . . Rogad todas.—Por la mujer que va a morir. Por la mujer que va a morir. En el instante en que acabó el último verso, cayó el señor Hollands exánime y de espaldas. Había muerto. En este momento daban las diez de la noche en el reloj de la vecina torre. Al día siguiente asistí al entierro. Dos días después recibí un número de un periodico de Boston. Fatalmente, y por efecto independiente de mi voluntad, mis ojos se fijaron en el siguiente párrafo: “Un crimen terrible ha esparcido el terror entre toda los habitantes de lo calle de Summers. Nos faltan detalles. Todo lo que hemos averiguado es que la víctima se llama Laura L. . . . que el asesino es un belga establecido en esta ciudad, llamado Van S. . . ., que los celos han sido el móvil del crimen, y que el asesinato se ha cometido a las diez en punto de la noche.” EDGARDO POE.