## **ARTHUR BERGH**

Op. 23

# The Pied Piper of Hamelin

RECITATION WITH PIANOFORTE

POEM BY ROBERT BROWNING



\$2.00

G. SCHIRMER NEW YORK : 3 EAST 43D ST. LONDON, W. : 18, BERNERS ST. BOSTON : THE BOSTON MUSIC CO.



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#### THE PIED PIPER OF HAMELIN

#### (ROBERT BROWNING)

Hamelin Town's in Brunswick, By famous Hanover City. The River Weser, deep and wide, Washes its walls on the southern side, A pleasanter spot you never spied; But when begins my ditty, Almost five hundred years ago, To see the townsfolk suffer so From vermin, was a pity.

#### Rats!

They fought the dogs and killed the cats, And bit the babies in the cradles, And ate the cheeses out of the vats, And licked the soup from the cook's own ladles, Split open the kegs of salted sprats, Made nests inside men's Sunday hats, And even spoiled the women's chats By drowning their speaking With shrieking and squeaking In fifty different sharps and flats.

At last the people in a body To the Town Hall came flocking! "Tis clear," they cried, "our Mayor's a noddy, And as for the Corporation—shocking, To think we buy gowns lined with ermine For dolts that can't or won't determine What's best to rid us of our vermin! You hope, because you're old and obese, To find in the furry, civic robe, ease? Rouse up, Sirs! Give your brains a racking To find the remedy we're lacking, Or, sure as fate, we'll send you packing!"

At this the Mayor and Corporation Quaked with a mighty consternation. An hour they sat in council. At length the Mayor broke silence: "For a guilder I'd my ermine gown sell; I wish I were a mile hence! It's easy to bid one rack one's brain; I'm sure my poor head aches again, I've scratched it so, and all in vain. Oh, for a trap, a trap, a trap!" Just as he said this, what should hap At the chamber door, but a gentle tap. "Bless us!" cried the Mayor, "what's that?"" 25001

With the Corporation as he sat, Looking little, though wondrous fat. Nor brighter was his eye, nor moister, Than a too-long-opened oyster, Save when at noon his paunch grew mutinous For a plate of turtle, green and glutinous. Only a scraping of shoes on the mat. "Anything like the sound of a rat Makes my heart go pit-a-pat!---Come in!" the Mayor cried, looking bigger, And in did come the strangest figure. His queer long coat from heel to head Was half of yellow and half of red; And he himself was tall and thin, With sharp blue eyes, each like a pin, And light loose hair, yet swarthy skin, No tuft on cheek, nor beard on chin, But lips where smiles went out and in. There was no guessing his kith or kin! And nobody could enough admire The tall man and his quaint attire! Quoth one, "It's as my great-grandsire, Starting up at the trump of Doom's tone, Had walked this way from his painted tombstone!" He advanced to the council table, And "Please your honours," he said, "I'm able By means of a secret charm to draw All creatures living beneath the sun That creep, or swim, or fly, or run, After me as you never saw! And I chiefly use my charm On creatures that do people harm, The mole and toad, and newt and viper; And people call me the Pied Piper!"

And here they noticed round his neck
A scarf of red and yellow stripe
To match with his coat of the selfsame cheque:
And at the scarf's end hung a pipe,
And his fingers, they noticed, were ever straying,
As if impatient to be playing
Upon the pipe, as low it dangled
Over his vesture so old-fangled.

"Yet," said he, "poor piper as I am, In Tartary I freed the Cham Last June from his huge **swarm of gnats**; I eased in Asia the Nizam Of a monstrous brood of vampire bats; And as for what your brain bewilders, If I can rid your town of rats,

Will you give me a thousand guilders?" "One? Fifty thousand!" was the exclamation Of the astonished Mayor and Corporation.

Into the street the Piper stept, Smiling first a little smile,

As if he knew what magic slept In his quiet pipe the while. Then like a musical adept To blow his pipe his lips he wrinkled, And green and blue his sharp eyes twinkled Like a candle flame where salt is sprinkled. And ere three shrill notes the pipe uttered, You heard as if an army muttered; And the muttering grew to a grumbling, And the grumbling grew to a mighty rumbling, And out of the houses the rats came tumbling: Great rats, small rats, lean rats, brawny rats, Brown rats, black rats, grey rats, tawny rats, Grave old plodders, gay young friskers,

Fathers, mothers, uncles, cousins, Cocking tails and pricking whiskers,

Families by tens and dozens, Brothers, sisters, husbands, wives, Followed the piper for their lives; From street to street he piped advancing, And step for step they followed dancing, Until they came to the River Weser,

Wherein all plunged and perished, Save one who, stout as Julius Cæsar, Swam across and lived to carry,

As he the manuscript he cherished, To Ratland home his commentary. Which was:

"At the first shrill notes of the pipe I heard a sound as of scraping tripe, And putting apples, wondrous ripe, Into a cider-press's gripe; And a moving away of pickle-tub boards, And a leaving ajar of conserve-cupboards, And the drawing of corks of train-oil flasks, And a breaking the hoops of butter-casks,

And it seems as if a voice, (Sweeter far than by harp or psaltery

Is breathed,) called out, 'Oh rats, rejoice! The world has grown to one vast dry-saltery. So munch on, crunch on, take your nuncheon! Breakfast, supper, dinner, luncheon!' And just as a bulky sugar-puncheon Already staved, like a great sun shone, Glorious, scarce an inch before me, Just as methought it said, Come bore me! I found the Weser rolling o'er me.'' 25001 You should have heard the Hamelin people Ringing the bells till they rocked the steeple. "Go," cried the Mayor, "and get long poles! Poke out the nests and block up the holes! Consult with carpenters and builders,

And leave in our town not even a trace Of the rats!" When suddenly up the face Of the Piper perked in the marketplace, With a "First, if you please, my thousand guilders."

A thousand guilders! The Mayor looked blue; So did the Corporation too. For council dinners made rare havoc With Claret, Moselle, Vin de Grave, Hock; And the money would replenish Their cellar's biggest butt with Rhenish. To pay this sum to a wandering fellow With a gypsy coat of red and yellow! "Beside," quoth the Mayor with a knowing wink, "Our business was done at the river's brink. We saw with our eyes the vermin sink, And what's dead can't come to life, I think; So, friend, we're not the folks to shrink From the duty of giving you something for drink, And a matter of money to put in your poke; But as for the guilders, what we spoke Of them, as you very well know, was in joke; Besides, our losses have made us thrifty. A thousand guilders! Come, take fifty!"

The Piper's face fell, and he cried, "No trifling! I can't wait, beside,-I've promised to visit by dinner-time Bagdad and accept the prime Of the Head Cook's pottage, all he's rich in, For having left in the Caliph's kitchen Of a nest of scorpions no survivor. With him I proved no bargain-driver; With you don't think I'll bate a stiver. And folks who put me in a passion May find me pipe to another fashion." "How?" cried the Mayor, "d'ye thing I'll brook Being worse treated than a cook? Insulted by a lazy ribald With idle pipe and vesture piebald? You threaten us, fellow? Do your worst, Blow your pipe then till you burst!"

Once more he stept into the street, And to his lips again Laid his long pipe of smooth straight cane;

And ere he blew three notes, (such sweet

Soft notes as yet musician's cunning Never gave the enraptured air,) There was a rustling, that seemed like a bustling Of merry crowds justling at pitching and hustling, Small feet were pattering, wooden shoes clattering, Little hands clapping and little tongues chattering, And like fowls in a farmyard when barley is scattering, Out came the children running;

All the little boys and girls With rosy cheeks and flaxen curls, And sparkling eyes, and teeth like pearls, Tripping and skipping ran merrily after The wonderful music with shouting and laughter.

The Mayor was dumb and the Council stood As if they were changed into blocks of wood, Unable to move a step, or cry To the children, merrily skipping by; And could only follow with the eye That joyous crowd at the Piper's back. But how the Mayor was on the rack, And the wretched Council's bosoms beat As the Piper turned from the High Street To where the Weser rolled its waters Right in the way of their sons and daughters! However, he turned from South to West, And to Koppelberg Hill his steps addressed, And after him the children pressed; Great was the joy in every breast: "He never can cross that mighty top! He's forced to let the piping drop, And we shall see our children stop." When lo! as he reached the mountainside, A wondrous portal opened wide, As if a cavern was suddenly hollowed; And the Piper advanced and the children followed, And when all were in to the very last, The door in the mountainside shut fast.

Did I say all? No! One was lame, And could not dance the whole of the way,
And in after years if you would blame His sadness, he was used to say,
"It's dull in our town since my playmates left, I can't forget that I'm bereft
Of all the pleasant sights they see,
Which the Piper also promised me.
For he led us, he said, to a joyous land,
Joining the town and close at hand, Where waters gushed and fruit-trees grew, And flowers put forth a fairer hue, And everything was strange and new; The sparrows were brighter than peacocks here, And the dogs outran our fallow deer, And honey-bees had lost their stings, And horses were born with eagles' wings; And just as I became assured My lame foot would be speedily cured, The music stopped and I stood still, And found myself outside the hill, Left alone against my will, To go now limping as before And never hear of that country more."

Alas, alas for Hamelin! There came into many a burgher's pate A text which says that Heaven's gate Opes to the rich at as easy rate As the needle's eye takes a camel in. The Mayor sent East, West, North and South, To offer the Piper by word of mouth, Wherever it was men's lot to find him,

Silver and gold to his heart's content, If he'd only return the way he went

And bring the children behind him. But when they saw 'twas a lost endeavour, And Piper and dancers were gone for ever, They made a decree that lawyers never Should think their records dated duly

If after the day of the month and the year These words did not as well appear:

"And so long after what happened here On the twenty-second of July, Thirteen Hundred and Seventy-six." And the better in memory to fix

The place of the children's last retreat, They called it the Pied Piper's Street, Where any one playing on pipe or tabour Was sure for the future to lose his labour; Nor suffered they Hostelry or Tavern

To shock with mirth a street so solemn, But opposite the place of the cavern

They wrote the story on a column, And on the Great Church Window painted The same to make the world acquainted How their children were stolen away. And there it stands to this very day. .

### The Pied Piper of Hamelin

#### **Robert Browning**

Arthur Bergh. Op. 23









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umn, And on the Great Church







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