

THE PIED PIPER OF HAMELIN

A Choral Reading

by
Robert Browning



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Extracts from the famous poem.

MAN'S VOICE: Hamelin Town's in Brunswick.
(Narrative style) 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.

SIX SOLOS: Rats!
in quick They fought the dogs and killed the cats,
succession 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 salter sprats,
Made nests inside men's Sunday hats,
LIGHT WOMEN: And even spoiled the women's chats
By drowning their speaking
With shrieking and squeaking
In fifty different sharps and flats.

ALL: 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!

DARK WOMEN: You hope, because you're old and obese,
To find in the furry, civic robe, ease?

ALL: Rouse up, Sirs! Give your brains a racking
To find the remedy we're lacking,
Or, sure as fate, we'll send you packing!"

MEN'S QUARTET: At this the Mayor and Corporation
Quaked with a mighty consternation.
An hour they sat in council.
At length the Mayor broke silence:

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