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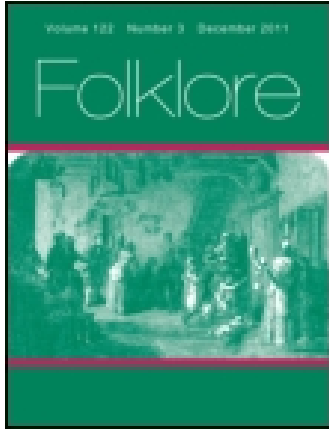
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The Pied Piper of Hamelin

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THE PIED PIPER OF HAMELIN.

FIVE years ago, "as I walk'd through the wilderness of this world, I lighted on a certain place" called Hanover, and tarried there awhile. Encouraged by the assurance of Browning, that—

"Hamelin Town's in Brunswick,
By famous Hanover city,"

I formed an enthusiastic resolve to tread in the footsteps of the "Pied Piper", and to do what I could to investigate the history of that old North-German tradition, smiled on by the genius of our great poet, and added within the last half-century to the common stock of English nursery-delights. The undertaking was greater than I anticipated. I had not realised that to one with a scarce school-girl knowledge of the language of the country, research would prove even more difficult than it is wont to be; and I had trusted too blindly to Browning's exactness in the matter of topography. That "Hamelin Town's in" Hanover, and not in Brunswick, was of no real consequence; but that "*by* famous Hanover city", translated into prose, should signify over twenty-five miles off—fifty there and back, to be impressed on the memory by the "calm deliberation" of a State railway—was a fact of serious importance to one who had but little leisure for excursions. However, I did contrive to trot my hobby thrice to Hameln, and I set my seven senses loose on the track of the Piper. Of course they were at fault: the Pied One ran to earth six centuries ago, and may not since then have visited "the glimpses of the moon"; but, in spite of that, I derived some sort of satisfaction from my introduction to the place; and as I have since, person-

ally and *per alios*, taken much pains to get at the literature of my subject, I hope I may be borne with as I attempt to set a portion of the result before the readers of FOLK-LORE.

Hameln is a charming old town, and if you go there knowing that it is one of the shrines of folk-lore, and go in sympathetic mood, you will feel as if you had passed out of every-day environment into story-land, and may wonder whether you have done so in a dream, or whether the bliss be yours in tangible reality. If in a dream, that would account for divers incongruities, and take away the shock of intrusive modernisms for which it were folly to blame the 11,000 who make the place their home, and whose main care it cannot be to live up to the picturesque tradition of which it is the scene. A very little make-believe, an equal knowledge of the history of architectural styles, and then, when you are in the quaint main street, whatever season and whatever year it be for other folk, it is with you the festival of SS. John and Paul, the 26th of June 1284; and you set your ears to catch some echo of the strain which wiled the lost but never-yet-forgotten children forth. Shortly after the Osterstrasse is entered on, a fine early 17th century dwelling, on the left, is safe to claim attention; it goes by the name of the Rattenfänger (*i.e.*, Ratcatcher's) Haus, and is probably so called because the end which abuts on the Bungelosestrasse has an inscription,¹ in German, more archaic than the building itself, commemorating the Outgoing. At the other extremity of the Osterstrasse is a similar record² on the Wedding- or Hochzeitshaus, a fine

¹ "Anno 1284. Am Dage Johannis et Pauli War der 26. Junii Durch einen Pieper mit allerly Farve bekleidet Gewesen cxxx Kinder verledet Binnen Hameln geboren To Calverie bi den Koppen verloren." As given in *Hameln und Bad Pyrmont: Wegweiser* (Hameln, Fuending), p. 5.

² "Nach Christi Geburt 1284 Jahr Gingen bei den Koppen unter Verwehr Hundert und dreissig Kinder, in Hameln geboren von einem Pfeiffer verfürd und verloren." (Fuending's *Wegweiser*, p. 6.)

structure erected between 1610 and 1617 for marriage festivities, but diverted from its purpose since 1721.¹ Behind rises the spire of the parish church of S. Nicholas, which may still enwall stones that witnessed how the parents prayed, while the Piper wrought sorrow for them without. On Sunday morning, too, some of the story-tellers say it was; but June 26th, 1284, was Monday; and in 1376, S. Mary Magdalene's Day, July 22nd, another alleged date (acceptable to Browning), fell on a Tuesday, if tables in Sir Harris Nicolas's *Chronology of History* be trustworthy. An ancient minster greatly rejuvenated, formerly the collegiate church of S. Boniface (Bonifatiusstift), is some little distance off on the left, hard by the bank of the Weser, which flows west of the town, not south, as Browning says, and goes with a sweep that would soon carry a horde of rats out of reach of flesh-pots. Golden mice were made by the Philistines² in Samuel's time when they were delivered from the plague that marred their land; but that may have been a golden age: this is an age of gingerbread, and the Hameln people manufacture rats accordingly. It will be understood that I use the word "gingerbread" generically: the artists work in sugar, chocolate, and other plastic materials, as best it pleases them. The card conveying "Grüsse aus Hameln" is nibbled round the edges to show its authenticity. In short, in tourist-season the staple trade seems to embody itself in rodents, for which the noted flour-mill on the river, in more senses than one, provides the raw material. I must also add that if the sapid sewers be quite free from rats, the rats neglect an opportunity.

In one window tin whistles, which bore token of being of British origin, were ticketed as "Rattensfänger Pfeifen", and though, when a lad with me put one of them to his lips, not a *ridiculus mus* came forth, it was plain that the children around were all alert and curious. Possibly, however,

¹ Sprenger's *Geschichte der Stadt Hameln*, bearbeitet vom Amtmann von Reissenstein, p. 153 (Hameln, 1861). Sprenger published in 1825.

² 1 Samuel, vi, 4, 5.

being warned by their elders against Pipers, as perils peculiar to the district, they may have planted their feet firmly and looked about for the police. In 1887 photographs of the beguiler abounded; not of course of the original Bunting, but of a well-fed burgher who personated him in June 1884, when Hameln made the best of her loss by celebrating that most famous incident in her history with pageant, speech, and pleasantries, thus causing, as somebody has observed, a tragedy to be the motive of a festival.¹ Two days the revels lasted: on the first, Herr Pietsch stood out and piped, and a multitude of children dressed in grey, with rat-like masks and india-rubber tails, swarmed after him; on the second, his music gathered little ones, in old-world garb, and he led them to a quasi-“Koppenberg”—but, like the King of France's army, “they all marched back again”! Julius Wolff, who has woven a charming poem² out of the Rattenfänger story, was there, and so was Victor Nessler the Alsatian composer, whose very popular opera³ is for the most part a musical rendering of Wolff. It were vain to speculate how many shades of other Hameln-stricken authors were hovering around. I think this festival may have quickened Hölbe, the sculptor's remarkable figure, of which I have a miniature reproduction here; as also a photograph which shows the expression of subtle malignancy far better than the cast. At the time of my visits the town sought money to have this figure erected in the Pferdemarkt. A companion statuette was of Gertrude, the fisher-girl, who was Singuf's—so Wolff calls him—love. The pair are already honoured in the fountain here represented.

When I came to seek for the Koppel, or Koppenberg, where the children of 1284 are said to have vanished, it

¹ *Das Rattenfängerfest in Hameln*, p. 1, etc. (Hameln, Niemeyer, 1884). Information about costumes from a letter from Fuendeling (1892).

² *Der Rattenfänger von Hameln: Eine Aventure*, 25te Auflage, (Berlin, 1885).

³ *Der Rattenfänger von Hameln*. Oper in fünf Akten (Leipzig, 1887).

seemed to me as if I were directed in turn to all points of the compass ; and I thought then, and have thought ever since, that there is something in the atmosphere of Hameln which tends to bewilderment and suggests enchantment. I sometimes felt there as if I were the victim of a spell ; and maybe some tricky Ariel *was* making me his sport. The fact that I and my companions spoke as barbarians had possibly something to do with the difficulties ; then, too, certain of the people appealed to may have fancied we were in quest of the Klüt, the hill to which Pietsch led his followers on the festal day ; and others may not have known—as at the outset I did not—that what is now called the Bassberg was, according to some, the mediæval Koppen. Koppen is suggestive of *heads*, and Dr. Otto Meinardus, Royal Archivist at Berlin, who has bestowed much research on the records of his native Hameln, believes that the scene of the Disappearance was the two-headed Teutberg, which commands the Hildesheim and Hanover roads, and bars the end of the Weser valley.¹ This would be a far cry for the little children ; but the Bassberg is within a stroll from the town, and I have but little doubt that I meditated on its summit on the occasion of my third hunt at Hameln. I am not as easily convinced as were the writer and the illustrator of a pleasant paper in the *Magazine of Art*² ; the hill was pointed out to them from a distance, they seem to have gone by instinct to the proper knoll, and (to quote) “we pitched at once on the spot where we felt sure the laughing children had disappeared ; a huge wild rose-bush, glowing with scarlet hips, was growing there. It must have been a lovely sight of flowers some months before. We gathered a bunch of the scarlet fruit as a memory of our visit. There

¹ *Neues Material zur Geschichte der Rattenfängersage*, in *Zeitschrift des historischen Vereins für Niedersachsen*, 1885, p. 267.

² *Hameln, the Town of the Pied Piper or “Der Rattenfänger”* (vol. for 1890, p. 192), by Katharine M. Macquoid.

was nothing besides this rose-tree to mark the scene of the mysterious catastrophe."

It is a curious coincidence that about 1654 roses¹ were all that Erich could discern on a sculptured stone on the Koppen, which was regarded as a memorial of that *Exodus Hamelensis* of which he was writing. Only a few years ago there were old people who professed to remember two stones in the form of a cross upon the hill²; and I myself fell in with a young man, of some twenty summers, who seemed to assert that he had often seen the record; yet I looked and looked in vain, and was scarcely solaced when Dr. Meinardus wrote to me³: "A memorial stone with an inscription on the so-called Koppen you will never find. If such a thing ever existed, which is doubtful, it is no longer there."

Is the episode of the Pied Piper credible? is the question that has been for some time before me; and, at the risk of incurring your scorn, I answer that it *is*. A few accretions, such as no tradition or even frequently re-written story is likely to avoid, must of course be cleared off; but this may easily be done, and then I think nothing will be found remaining that any reverent-minded folk-loreer need decline to hold.

Early in the present century an account of the Hameln disaster was distilled from ten different sources (four only of them to be sipped of at the British Museum) by the Brothers Grimm, for their *Deutsche Sagen*,⁴ where it runs essentially as follows. In the year 1284, a strange man appeared at Hameln wearing a many-coloured coat, which is said to have earned for him the name of Bundting. He gave

¹ Sprenger, p. 15, *note*.

² "Alte Leute in Hameln wollen diese Kreuze noch gekannt haben."
—Letter from Herr Fuendeling, 1887.

³ "Einen Gedenkstein mit einer Inschrift am sogenannten 'Koppen' werden Sie wol nie finden. Wenn ein solcher vorhanden war, was man bezweifeln muss, so ist er jetzt keineswegs mehr dort."—1887.

⁴ Vol. i (2nd ed.), pp. 290-2.

himself out to be a rat-catcher, and promised to free the town from mice and rats for a stated sum, which the burghers agreed to pay. He drew out a little pipe, sounded it, and straightway all the rats and mice ran from the houses and gathered round him. He led them to the Weser, and, when he trussed up his garments and entered the water, they rushed in after him and were drowned. Then the burghers, being freed from the plague, repudiated their contract with Bundting, who departed in hot anger. On the Festival of SS. John and Paul, the 26th of June, at seven o'clock in the morning, or, as some say, at midday, he appeared again in the guise of a hunter with a curious red cap on his head, and he sounded his pipe in the lanes. At once came forth, not rats and mice, but children—boys and girls of four years old and upwards—and, moreover, the Burgermaster's grown-up daughter. All followed him, followed him out till they came to a hill, where he and they disappeared. So said a nursemaid, who, babe in arms, had felt the attraction from afar. Parents hastened, crowding through the gates, to seek their darlings, messengers were sent over land and water to pursue the guest; but everything was vain. In all, 130 children were amissing. Some have it that two—one blind, the other dumb, and apparently also deaf—came back again: the former, unable to point out the place of disappearance, could yet tell well enough why the Piper had been followed; while the mute knew the place, but had been insensible to the sound. A little lad who set off running in his shirt, and returned to fetch his coat, took up the pursuit too late to share the lot of his playmates.

This I believe to be a fair presentment of the story as it would now be told by one whose memory had not been led astray by latter-day literary adepts, who have elaborated the theme. The curious in chronology may perhaps take exception to my date, for authors offer a bewildering variety, ranging from 1259 to 1378. Sometimes a theory is accountable; sometimes the habit of there or thereabout-

ness. 1531 and 1556 were dates that, in earlier times, appeared one under the other at Hameln upon its Neuethor,¹ above a legend stating that the gate was erected 272 years after the Outgoing: 272 subtracted from 1531 gives 1259; from 1556, 1284; result, uncertainty. A writer in 1556² speaks of about 180 years ago; another, in 1568,³ puts it at about 190; while in 1643⁴ it is a matter of 250 years since. 1284 has, at present, vogue in Hameln. I fancy Browning's direct authority for 1376 was Verstegan.⁵

I have an impression that I range myself with a very small minority in accepting the account of the Outgoing just given as being approximately true. The explanations that have been offered to make it more credible to the majority may be glanced at. (1) It has been elaborated out of a possible mock-fight on the Koppen, in which earnest succeeded jest, and many young men were slain, and so lost to their parents. (2) An earthquake or a landslip engulfed the 130. (3) Tilo Colup, pretending that he was the Emperor Frederick II returned from the Holy Land, attracted many followers in the latter part of the 13th century, and missing Hameln lads may have been among them. (4) In 1286, Jews are said to have murdered children in a mill at Fulda: Hameln being originally Quern Hameln, the sorrow was possibly imputed to her by error. (5) There was strife in Brunswick in 1281 between Duke Albrecht and his sons. One of them, being arrested and imprisoned without warning, his sudden removal may have

¹ *Passim*; but see Sprenger, pp. 14 and 152. The inscription ran: "Centu ter denos cum magus ab urbe puellos duxerat ante 272 condita porta fui."

² Fincelius.

³ Hondorff.

⁴ Howell.

⁵ *A Restitution of Decayed Intelligence*, 1605 (1634, pp. 85, 86). Mr. Arthur Symons (*An Introduction to the Study of Browning*, p. 50) says, "N^o 4th Wanley's *Wonders of the Little World*, 1678, and the books there cited", were the authorities. Wanley gives 1284, and two out of the three writers on whom he depends, never so much as mention 1376; the third, Schot, *Phys. Curios*, I have not met with. Wier and Howell are the others.

been multiplied by 130.¹ (6) Fein² believed that he unmasked fable when he maintained the slaughter of many sons of Hameln at the battle of Sedemünde (1259), and the carrying of others into captivity, to be the groundwork of the legend. He observed that on a sculptured house in the Papenstrasse the Piper was followed by youths bearing spears.³ Still, setting aside the fact that it is hardly likely the glory and fate of war would be reduced to anything as ignominious as the Koppen catastrophe, the two events were recorded as separate items in one of the municipal registers⁴; and the result of the fight was annually commemorated in the parish church of S. Nicholas⁵ and at the Bonifatiusstift⁶ on S. Pantaleon's Day. (7) Some authors give a mystical interpretation; Dr. Busch,⁷ for instance, regards the Piper as the Aryan death-god; and others talk of Dame Hulda, and see souls in the rats as well as in the children. (8) Our own countryman, Mr. Baring-Gould, writes: "The root of the myth is this: the Piper is no other than the wind, and the ancients held that in the wind were the souls of the dead."⁸ (9) I do not recollect whether those universal resolvents—Dawn and Darkness—have been called into requisition, but, if I myself were asked to give the *mot d'énigme*, I should say with confidence Bunting is an apt designation for the source of colour, and Kockerill, another name applied to him in story,⁹ suggests "the bird of dawning". We need not hesitate to recognise the sun in the pied musician, who banishes those nocturnal marauders, rats, and renders

¹ First five suggestions in Martin Schoock's *Fabula Hamelensis* (1659), of which I have an abstract.

² *Die entlarvete Fabel vom Ausgange der Hamelschen Kinder* (1749). I know this only at second-hand.

³ Von Reissenstein's note to Sprenger, p. 15.

⁴ *Die historische Kern*, by Dr. Meinardus (1882), p. 49.

⁵ Sprenger, p. 10.

⁶ Meinardus, p. 24.

⁷ *Die Grenaboten*, i, Semester, 1875, p. 505.

⁸ *Curious Myths of the Middle Ages*, p. 427.

⁹ *Die Wunderpfeife, oder die Kinder von Hameln*, by Gustav Nieritz.

minor heavenly bodies invisible by his brightness. It is on such lines that the story of Apollo Smintheus is interpreted.¹

But now let us turn from these ingenuities, and set ourselves to consider what claim the story of the Pied Piper may have to be received as an essentially true if not wholly unvarnished tale. How does it appear when we seek for a record of it in writings of the 13th century, in books which must have been penned before this more than nine-days' wonder had ceased to interest, and long ere wounds in Hameln hearts would heal? Martin Schoock, who essayed to demolish what he called the *Fabula Hamelensis* in 1659, assures us that no contemporary left note of the event, and gives us to understand that there was an ominous consensus of silence concerning it for some 250 years, until 16th century authors busied themselves to make it known. He delivers himself in Latin; but, being interpreted, he seems to say: "Under the Emperor Rudolf of Hapsburg, who began to reign A.D. 1272, lived the compiler of the *Annales Colmariensium*, who with his continuator reaches 1302; of all those whom I know, he is the most ignorant of the laws of history, and descends even to such poor matters as the details of the harvest and vintage, and of the sale of ripe strawberries, cherries, and pears in the June of 1283. Who would believe that an author relating such *minutiæ* would neglect a prodigy whose fame ought to have filled, if not all Europe at least all Germany? Also Werner Rolewinck à Laer, a Westphalian, a man deeply learned in the Scriptures, and in matters secular . . . though living near Hameln and stopping at 1464, does not gather this flower, the exit of the children from that town, into his nosegay (*Fasciculi Temporum*). Like remark might be made of the author of the *Magnum Chronicon Belgici*, ending 1474, who revels in all kinds of historic trifles; of Trithemius, Abbot of Spanheim, who snatched from darkness whatever was worth remembering in his

¹ *Curious Myths*, p. 435.

Chronicon Hirsangiense ending 1370, and *Spanheimense* ending with 1502; of Hartmann Schedel, author of the *Nuremberg Chronicle*, down to 1492; Naucnerus, Chancellor of the University of Tübingen, whose record goes through several generations to 1500: and of Albert Crantz, author of a Saxon history reaching to 1520. Even Paulus Langius, though there be rare things in his chronicle, which ends in 1515, omits this story, nor is there a trace of it in Johannes Aventinum. Hence we are of opinion," adds Schoock, "that this affair is an invention of superstition and monkish ignorance."

Well, possibly it may be all this; but I cannot myself allow that an alleged event of mediæval times ought to be stamped out of credence, merely because it was not chronicled by certain contemporary scribes, whose *works* we happen to know, but of whose idiosyncrasies, disabilities, motives, and scope we cannot adequately judge. A case in point is the following: I confess I began to sympathise with the incredulity of Schoock when I learnt from Sprenger¹ that John de Polde or Pohle takes no notice of the Outgoing in his *Chronicon Hamelense*, for he worked at it as an aged man in 1384, and if he came of native stock,² his own father may have been in peril from the Piper, may have been the very babe who kept the nursemaid back from joining in the rout. This consideration loses cogency when we know the limit of the undertaking. Meinardus³ tells us that we ought not to wonder at Pohle's silence, because he was merely engaged on a history of the Collegiate Church at Hameln, of which he was a canon, and that he did not meddle with municipal matters or speak of political events. Let us give the good man credit for minding his own business, and acknowledge that he had nothing to do with ours. We should remember, too, that although the narrative in which we are

¹ Pp. 16 and 268.

² This, his surname does not encourage us to suppose.

³ *Der historische Kern*, p. 14.

interested did not engage the pens of the aforesaid writers, it may nevertheless have put in motion those of other scribes whose parchments have been less successful in the war with Time. When we reflect how strangely rare copies of whole editions of comparatively modern books have grown, we ought not to find it difficult to realise that hundreds of *unique* MSS. would utterly pass out of being through fire, water, and violence in the blustrous Middle Ages. With them would perish the sole record of some episodes which our after-times have never heard of, and likewise the only documentary evidence of others that, until the invention of printing, would be handed on to later ages by tradition. It is with these latter that I would have you class the Hameln story, if I should fail to show there is reason for thinking that its preservation was never for long, if indeed at all, confided to the popular memory alone.

From the 16th century, when men's minds were roused into fertility by great religious agitation and by the impulse of the new learning, and when the fresh faculty of multiplying copies had encouraged the making of books and lessened their chance of extermination, we have abundant testimony that concerns us. The earliest I can quote is that of Finclius, a Doctor of Medicine, who—to translate the quaint German of his *Wunderzeichen*¹ (1556), says: "Of the Devil's power and wickedness will I here tell a truc history. About 180 years ago, on S. Mary Magdalene's Day, it came to pass at Hammel on the Weser in Saxony, that the Devil went about the streets visibly in human form, piped and allured many children, boys and girls, and led them through the town-gate towards a mountain. When he arrived there he disappeared with the numerous children who had followed him, and nobody knew what became of the children. Thus did a girl who had followed them afar report to her parents, and thereupon diligent search and inquiry was soon made over

¹ C., v.

land and water to find out whether the children had possibly been stolen and led away. But nobody could tell what had become of the children. This grieved the parents terribly, and is a fearful example of divine anger against sin. This is all written in the town-book of Hameln, where many persons of high standing have read and heard it."

"Written in the town-book of Hammel", he says, and so say not only Hondorff¹ (1568), who took Fincelius on trust, and later men who nourished themselves on Hondorff; but the assertion is confirmed by Wier, who visited Hameln in 1567,² and seems to have made personal examination of all the evidence it could adduce in support of its fame. He had published his book on the "Delusions of Devils", *De Præstigiis Dæmonorum*, in 1563, the second edition in the following year, but showed no sign of knowing anything of that "modern instance", the Pied Piper. He had heard of it, however, before a third issue of his work was ready at Basle in 1566, and he made it the subject of a short paragraph. A few months later, he sought the *locus in quo*, and became as enthusiastic a believer as even I could wish in the authenticity of all that he was shown and told. The 4th edition of *De Præstigiis*, which came out in 1577, gives token of this: after repeating the narrative, he says in Latin, what amounts in English to: "These facts are thus written in the annals of Hammel and are religiously guarded in the archives; they are to be read also in the sacred books of the Church, and to be seen in the painted panes of the same; of which fact I am an eye witness. Besides, as confirmation of the story, the older³

¹ *Promptorium Exemplorum*, p. 69b.

² This and what follows concerning Wier is gathered from Meinardus's pamphlet, *Der historische Kern*, pp. 14, 15. Wier's work is not in the British Museum Library.

³ Subsequent to 1379 a change in the local government took place, and enactments in the statute-book (*Der Donat*) customarily begin "de olde rad un de nye hebbet ghesateghet". (Sprenger, pp. 31 and 177.)

magistracy was accustomed to write together on its public documents: "in the year of Christ and in that of the going out of the children," etc. Moreover, care is taken to this day that there should be a perpetual memorial of the event, for the sound of a drum [*tympanum*] is never allowed in that street along which the children went forth, and even if a bride be led from it, there must be no music till she has passed out, nor are dances performed there. In consequence of this the street is actually called Bungalosestrass"—or, as Meinardus corrects, Bungelosestrasse, or Drumless Street, *Bunge* signifying *Trommel*. In 1634 Richard Vestegan¹ writes that "no Ostery" is "to be there holden."

There is a Bungelose,² or Bungenlos³ (the name is variously spelt) Street now at Hameln in which no kind of music is permitted, excepting that which steals in through the air, as I have heard it do, from some player elsewhere. I thought I had caught the burghers napping; but no; the notes were for the enlivenment of an adjacent street, and no by-law could forbid them to creep over and through the houses into the lane sacred to a never-forgotten grief. That the Bungelosestr. was not invented, as some have suggested, in the middle of the sixteenth century, to furnish a substantial background to the Pied Piper is evident, since Dr. Meinardus's discovery⁴ of a document at Hameln, in which, under the date Friday, the 16th of September 1496, occurs the phrase "uppe der bungehelosenstrate". It is, of course, open to anyone to say that an odd, because probably corrupt, name was pressed into the service of our legend. My own doubt hovers, rather, over the point that a tuneless thing like a drum should be taken as the representative musical instrument, in a case

¹ P. 86. I have not seen the *Restitution* of 1605.

² *Plan* issued by Schmidt and Suckert.

³ Gier's *Plan*.

⁴ *Die Bungelosestrasse*, in *Zeitschrift des historischen Vereins für Niedersachsen*, 1884, pp. 271-2.

where a pipe would have been far more typical and suggestive.

The memorial-glass "on the great church window painted", which Browning sang, was probably of that which Wier saw. It was not in the Minster, but in the parish church of S. Nicholas, at the east end. "Anno 1571" is at the base of the inscription, as quoted by Schoock from Erich's *Exodus Hamelensis*, a work not in the British Museum Library, and at present beyond my reach. This must refer to a restoration of the glass at the instance of Friedrich Poppendieck, which Bunting notes.¹ Wier's visit was four years earlier than that, namely in 1567. By 1654, when Erich wrote, the legend was somewhat imperfect,² but one can see that it told of the leading forth of the Hameln children to the Koppen on that fateful day of S. John and S. Paul. The "storied window" was turned to good account by Pastor Letzner, 1590, who, in his *Chronicle* concerning the foundations at Hildesheim, exclaims with reference to it,³ "O you dear Christian parents, do not behold and gaze on this painting, merely as a cow or some other irrational beast looks at an old door; but ponder it in your hearts in a Christian manner, and do not let your children run astray, so that the Devil gets power over them, as may soon and easily happen." If you ask me what became of this interesting glass, which Seyfrid in 1679 mentions in the *Medulla* as then existing, I think I can give you a hint. I supposed the French—who are the "Oliver Cromwells" of the Continent—had made an end of it during their occupation of Hameln, when they used the Marktkirche as a hospital; but I fear the blame is more likely to be our own. The

¹ *Braunschweigisch-Lüneburgische Chronica*, p. 52 (vol. i, 1584; ii, 1584).

² AM. DAGE JOHANNES UND . PALI SINT . BINNEN HAMMELIN .
GEBAREN . THOK VARIE . UNDE DORCH ALLDRLEI .
GEDEN . KOPPEN.

Anno 1571.

³ *Die Grenaboten*, No. 26, p. 500.

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building served as a storehouse for booty after the battle of Minden in 1759, and that being disposed of, the English turned it into a flour-magazine. According to the indignant Sprenger,¹ "they destroyed pulpit, altar, and organ, an outrage which the French, though enemies, had not permitted. The paintings were burnt, and many of the organ-pipes stolen."

We will next consider what written testimony the men of Hameln could present to the enquiring Wier. He speaks of Church books in the plural, and there is no reason to doubt that he saw them; but they are all gone somewhither by this time, and, as far as I know, only a single volume has been specifically named,² a *Passionale* of the Middle Ages, the title-page of which was inscribed in red ink, with an invocation to the B.V.M., and some poor Latin verses³ about the swallowing up of the children, that had a prose version⁴ underneath. These things are attributed to the fourteenth or fifteenth century. I cannot help the vagueness, though I regret it. The *Passionale* belonged to the Minster, and the entries were copied from it by Pastor Herr (who died 1753) into one of the two books of miscellaneous matter about Hameln, which it was his pleasure to collect.

Among municipal archives, it is likely that Wier saw, because from their very *raison d'être* they were just what he would seek to see, the *Brade* and the *Donat*, the former

¹ P. 208.

² *Die historische Kern*, pp. 7, 8.

³ "Post duo C. C. mille post octoginta quaterve
—Annus hic est ille, quo languet sexus uterque—
Orbantis pueros centumque triginta Joannis
Et Pauli caros Hamelenses non sine damnis,
Fatur, ut omnes eos vivos Calvaria sorpsit,
Christi tuere reos, ne tam mala res quibus obsit."

⁴ "Anno millesimo ducentesimo octuagesimo quarto in die Johannis et Pauli perdiderunt Hamelenses centum et triginta pueros, qui intraverunt montem Calvariam."

a book of historical documents, the latter the *Codex Statutorum*. Now it is important to note that he went away satisfied with the evidence set before him in 1567, because, eighteen years later, Franz Müller copied the *Brade* into a new book, and the old one, that inspected by Wier, which dated from 1350, and contained memoranda relating to yet earlier times, disappeared, as Hameln things have a trick of doing. The *Donat*, also held to be a transcript of one gone before, begins with the thirteenth century. Good Pastor Herr made a translation of it in the eighteenth, but that, *de more*, has vanished. In the *Donat* we have examples of dates being accompanied by a reference to the "Outgoing", and perhaps these may be the instances which impressed themselves on Wier. It so, the fact must be regretted, for they have been denounced as interpolations and forgeries by competent judges.¹ The handwriting of the entries and of the memorial date are said to differ, and that of the latter to be of the sixteenth century. The *Brade* does contain a paragraph anent the children, and that, for many reasons, it is important I should quote. It may be Englished thus: "In the year 1284, on the day of John and Paul, on the 26th day of the month of June, 130 children, born in Hameln, were brought out of the town by a piper, dressed in many colours, led through the Osterthor to the Koppen by Calvary, and lost." To this effect are all the inscriptions I have ever seen, or ever read of anybody else seeing in "Hamelin Town" itself, always excepting the verses in the *Passionale* which run "*omnes eos vivos Calvaria sorpsit*", that may be the result of poetical licence; the sober prose gloss attached to them does not venture beyond "*qui intraverunt montem Calvarium*".

But what of the rats? Yes, what of the rats? Where did they creep into the story? I believe our friend Wier was the first to assert in print that the Piper was actuated

¹ Herr Sebastian Spilker, Junior Councillor of Hameln (1654?), and Dr. Meinardus in our own time.

by anger against the town-council for its repudiation of his claim as vermin-destroyer. He said it before he went to Hameln, in the third edition of *De Præstigiis*, and after his return he repeated it, in the fourth. Now he would scarcely have done that if his version had been at variance with that current at head-quarters. That he, or we, should find the tale of civic chicanery set forth in municipal records, and engraven on public buildings, would be to expect too much of human nature. But Wier said the Piper was hired to entice away *glires*, dormice; and Kirchner of Fulda—he wrote¹ in 1650—spoke of the folk being plagued by mice and shrew-mice (*murium soricumque agminibus*), but in the meantime, 1588, Pomarius had introduced his readers to *die grosse Ratsen*, which infest most modern accounts of the comedy that had such tragic close.

The question as to the kind of rodent that raged at Hameln is one of much interest, though I must not do more than glance at it. Rats are rare in folk-tales, I believe, and even when there, have often been evolved out of original mice. Gubernatis has bare mention of them in his *Zoological Mythology*. Naturalists have taught that *mus rattus*, the black rat, found its way to Europe only about the beginning of the sixteenth century, and that the brown, *m. decumanus*, did not reach the western countries of the Continent until the middle of the eighteenth. How did either contrive to swarm at Hameln some hundreds of years before it got there? This is really the most incredible part of our story! Is Science at fault, and is Literature keener at smelling a rat than she? Mohammed Tabari² says that the voyagers in the Ark were put to straits by rats, so Noah passed his hand down the back of the lion, who sneezed, and the cat, which did not exist before then, leaped out of its nose, and went for the

¹ Quoted by Schoock.

² The authority referred to by Baring-Gould, who gives the story in *Legends of Old Testament Characters*, vol. i, p. 113.

rats—but perhaps we have hardly time to go back as far as the Deluge. It may suffice to remind the reader of what a friend¹ has pointed out to me, that, in the eleventh century, Norman *mures et rati* annoyed the blessed Lanfranc,² who on one occasion conveyed a demonstrative cat in a bag *ad comprimendum furorum illorum*; whilst in the twelfth century, Giraldus Cambrensis³ twice mentions *mures majores, qui vulgariter rati vocantur*. Thirteen hundred and sixty-two gave us that notable passage in the prologue of *Piers the Plowman*,⁴ touching the project of belling the cat, where we have

“ a route
Of ratones at ones
And smale mys mid hem”;

and it is plain that the distinction between the two is more than one of size or age, because a wise mouse stands forth and contrasts the habits of himself and his brethren, the masses, with those of the burgher-like rats. It is unnecessary to construct a catena of authors from Langland's time to Shakespeare's, in order to prove that rats were perfectly familiar then, instead of being as strange as bandicoots would now be in London backyards and basements.

So, in spite of the naturalists, I think there might well be rats in Hameln in 1284, and, indeed, the memorable swarm may actually mark the epoch of their first appearance there. We do not wonder that the civic fathers were disturbed, and that somebody was ready to help them out of the difficulty; the trial to faith comes in when we hear how he set about it and succeeded. For myself, I frankly confess that I do not regard the performance of the “ Pied

¹ This was the late E. A. Freeman, D.C.L., etc., who died the week after this paper was read.

² *Lanfranci Vita*, cap. 11 in *Opera*, ed. D'Achery, 1648.

³ *Topographia Hibernica*, Dist. II, Cap. xxxii; *Itinerarium Cambriae*, Lib. II, Cap. ii. Welshmen nowadays call rats French mice, and so do the folk of Connemara.

⁴ Lines 146-207.

Piper" as being indubitably "a fond thing vainly invented"; I want more proof that it is so than the poor thing, popular belief. When I was young, oil and troubled water were associated only in a figure of speech, supposed to be born of the ignorance and poetical exuberance of the ancients; whereas now the rule of oil over the waves is considered less questionable than that of Britannia. *Multa renascentur.* That the lower animals are affected by musical sounds has been known for centuries; and rats, from what one reads of the rhyming¹ of the Irish contingent, and of the survival of poetical conjurations in France and elsewhere,² may be specially susceptible to the influence of the Muses; if we did but know the Piper's tune, it may be *fin-de-siècle* rats would rush forth with the same mad eagerness as those of old. The *very* strain it ought to be: "open Barley" had a goodly sound, but it served not Cassim's turn when he failed to think of "open Sesame".

Our Hameln artist does not stand alone. Once upon a time the district about Lorch³ was delivered from ants, crickets, and rats by three pipers, who being defrauded of the guerdon, played off pigs, sheep, and little ones respectively; and in 1240 a Capuchin named Angionini⁴ lured into the river all kinds of domestic animals and stock at Draucy-les-Nouis near Paris, because the villagers refused him the reward for freeing them of rats and mice by means of a small book and a little demon. Other cases might be found for the comfort of those who, instead of agreeing that recurrence of an alleged experience goes to confirm the reality of it, regard multiplication of examples as tending to the discredit of them all. It is only when

¹ *As You Like It*, Act iii, Sc. 2, 188; *Of Poetry*, Temple's *Miscellanea*, P. ii, p. 244.

² Rolland, *Faune Populaire: Les Mammifères Sauvages*, pp. 24-7.

³ Cited in *Curious Myths*, pp. 422, 432, from Wolf's *Beitrag zur deutschen Mythologie*, i, 171.

⁴ Sprenger, p. 16, from *Le Corsaire*, of December 1824.

such students have collected half-a-dozen "variants" that they feel their incredulity justifiable, range their treasure in a "cycle", and account their attitude as being truly scientific!

If what is told of more than one place, cannot be told with truth of any, and what has never happened in our time never happened at all, the exodus of the Hameln innocents is in "a parlous state". We have just glanced at the musical kidnapping of Lorch,¹ and Baring-Gould also reports how Brandenburg was once visited by a man who went fiddling through the streets till he had a troop of little listeners whom he wiled to the Marienberg, which opened to enclose both him and them. Nearer home, according to Dr. Kirkpatrick in *The Sea Piece*, a narrative, philosophical, and descriptive poem published in 1750, a like tradition is attached to Cave Hill near Belfast,² though I believe the memory of it is now grown dim.

¹ *Curious Myths*, p. 422.

² " Here, as Tradition's hoary Legend tells,
A blinking Piper once with magic Spells
And Strains beyond a vulgar Bagpipe's sound,
Gathered the dancing Country wide around ;
When hither as he drew the tripping Rear
(Dreadful to think and difficult to swear !)
The gaping Mountain yawn'd from side to side,
A hideous Cavern, darksome, deep, and wide ;
In skipt th' exulting Demon, piping loud,
With passive joy succeeded by the Croud ;
The winding Cavern, trembling, as he play'd,
With dreadful Echoes rung throughout its Shade ;
There firm and instant clos'd the greedy Womb,
Where wide-born Thousands met a common Tomb.
Ev'n now the good Inhabitant relates
With serious Horror their disastrous Fates ;
And as the noted Spot he ventures near,
His Fancy, strung with Tales and shook with Fear,
Sounds magic Concerts in his tingling Ear ;
With superstitious Awe and solemn Face,
Trembling he points, and thinks he points the Place."

“A blinking Piper once with magic Spells
And Strains beyond a vulgar Bagpipe’s Sound,
Gathered the dancing Country wide around,”

and led the way into the gaping, yawning mountain, which
in due course

“closed the greedy Womb,
Where wide-born Thousands met a common Tomb.”

Now the veracity of this tale, and of the rest, is not at present my affair; I must mention them lest I should be accused of keeping, what some may consider damaging facts, in the background; but it is my claim for the Hameln story, of which we have many data, wanting to the others, that it stands alone, and should be judged apart from them. There was nothing supernatural, believe me, in the leading away of the children, indeed nothing, putting scale out of the question, that was not commonplace. Imps continue to rush after men, of whom the Pied One is a type; and, when they do not come to grief, let the praise belong to the piper. If it be not a thing incredible that in 1211 “a multitude amounting as some say to 90,000 chiefly composed of children” [“for the most part from Germany”] “and commanded by a child, set out for the purpose of recovering the Holy Land”,¹ we may surely swallow the assertion that 130 young Hamelnians ran away after an attractive gaily-garbed musician in 1284. Though mediæval chorea was promoted by fiving and red colours,² it is not necessary to believe with Meinardus³ that they were affected by dancing-mania like the 100 children of Erfurt,⁴ who in 1237 skipped and jumped along the road until they came to Arnstadt, where they fell to the ground in utter exhaustion. Neither do I think the wild rites of Mid-

¹ Hallam’s *State of Europe in the Middle Ages*, vol. ii, p. 359, note.

² Hecker’s *Epidemics of the Middle Ages*, Part ii, pp. 8, 49.

³ *Die historische Kern*, p. 30, etc. I believe Schoock was the first to suggest this.

⁴ Hecker, p. 27.

summer, or S. John Baptist's, Eve should bear the blame, as three nights had passed between them and the fresh morn of the festival of S. John and S. Paul—Roman brothers, and Martyrs—when the Piper piped his summons, and the joy of many households sped away. Nothing more than childish curiosity and excitement, freedom from suspicion, carelessness of consequences, was wanted to produce the effect. Very ordinary causes brought about a kind of *Kinderausgang* in London in 1643; it led Howell¹ the traveller and letter-writer to relate the Hameln story to his correspondent. He prefaces it thus: "I saw such prodigious things daily done these few Years past, that I had resolved with myself to give over wondering at anything, yet a passage happened this Week that forced me to wonder once more, because it is without parallel. It was that some odd Fellows went skulking up and down London Streets, and with Figs and Raisins allured little Children, and so purloined them away from their Parents and carried them a Ship-board far beyond the Sea, where, by cutting their Hair, and other Devices, they so disguised them that their own Parents could not know them." Given another Age, and a chronicler of different temperament, and these embodiments of diabolic craft had, like the Pied Piper, painted a moral and adorned a tale, as Diabolus himself.

Do I presume too much in hoping that, thus far, you are all with me? I expect to be asked with some sign of sarcasm whether the going into the Koppen is also to be regarded as a natural occurrence. Certainly not, if *into* must needs imply subterranean entry; but I take it in the sense in which it is familiar to us in the New Testament and out of it, when "*into* a mountain" denotes no more than exterior or superficial access, and I stagger not. Love of the marvellous and misapprehension were parents of the fancy that Bunting and his audience were actually absorbed

¹ *Epistolæ Ho.—Eliana*, B. i, Sect. 6, Letter XLIX, dated Fleet, 1 Oct. 1643.

by the hill, and it was probably fostered by the misreading of *Calvaria*, a praying-station, as *cavaria*, a hollow place or cave, of which I saw an instance during the preparation of this paper. The historical nursemaid, who beheld things from afar, *must* be answerable for something—"I know that girl, she comes fra' Sheffield"—whilst the blind boy and the mute would add their quota to the wonder.

Whither Piper and children went, when they vanished from sight of the two watchers, into the Koppenberg, it is at this time impossible to determine. The leader gained a start, gained it in a day when electricity could not head a fugitive, and had everything but the number of the convoy in his favour. It is as likely as not that the wily fellow doubled as soon as the lie of the land furthered his purpose, came down to the river and, by pre-arrangement, was able to use it as a silent highway, on which the children passed easily with the current to some district beyond the hue and cry. Once at Bremen there were, what Samuel Johnson might call "potentialities" of evasion, on which I need not dwell.

In 1650, Kirchner, a Jesuit, stated on the alleged authority of a Transylvanian chronicle¹ that the folk of Siebenbüрге came of the kidnapped Hamelnians, and spoke their tongue. The theory had been referred to by Verstegan nearly half a century before Kirchner's *Musurgia Universalis* appeared, but he discredited it, attributed the likeness of language to Saxon colonisation of Transylvania by Charles the Great, and seems to have known nothing of the chronicler relied on by the later writer. "Some doe report", says Verstegan,² "that there are divers found among the Saxons in Transilvania that have the like surnames unto the Burgers of Hamel, and will thereby seem to infer that this jugler or pied piper might by negro-mancy have transported them thither; but this carrieth

¹ I gather this from an abstract of *Fabula Hamelensis*.

² I copy from the edition of 1634, but the passage also occurs (I am told) in that of 1605.

but little appearance of truth, because it would have been almost as great a wonder unto the Saxons of Transylvania to have had so many strange children brought among them they knew not how, as it were to those of Hamel to lose them ; and they could not but have kept memory of so strange a thing, if indeed any such thing had there hapened."

It is not unlikely, I think, that some relic, real or supposed, of the children found in Siebenberge in the Hameln district may have given colour to the belief that they had been traced to Siebenbürge in Transylvania. So a certain correspondence led Schoock to imagine that he had found the epitaph of the Pied Piper in S. Laurence's, Padua. The memorial had been erected by the German nation, and the subject of it, a Transylvanian named Valentine Graecirus or Bacfort, had died at the age of forty-nine in 1524 ; but as his "rare skill in pipe-playing" had led to his being "admired as another Orpheus", no one could doubt—so thought Schoock—that he was the performer usually credited to 1284 !

After all this, is it not somewhat startling to learn, from Mrs. Gerard's *Land beyond the Forest*,¹ that the story of the juvenile immigrants is still credited in Transylvania? The journey is said to have been performed through subterranean passages, and the Almesche Höhle, in the north-east of the country, is pointed out as being the place where the travellers reissued to the light of day. At the village of Nadesch² the arrival of the German ancestors is annually commemorated, but I do not feel sure that they are supposed to have come from Hameln, though Mrs. Gerard so expresses herself that I think it not unlikely such may be the case. On a particular day all the lads dress up as pilgrims and assemble round a flag. Headed by an old man, they go about the streets in procession singing psalms, stopping to dance and to refresh themselves at intervals. When questioned, they say, "Thus came our forefathers,

¹ Vol. i, pp. 52, 54.

² P. 51.

free people like ourselves, from Saxonia into this land, behind the flag and drum and with staffs in their hands. And because we have not invented this custom, neither did our ancestors invent it, but have transmitted it from generation to generation, so do we, too, desire to hand it down to our children and grandchildren."

One word in conclusion: I have made great inroad on the reader's patience, though I have by no means exhausted my subject, and humbly apologise for being as long-winded as the Piper, without, at the same time, being able to exercise a corresponding charm.

ELIZA GUTHRIE.
