

1876

FAME'S PENNY TRUMPET

Lewis Carroll

Carroll, Lewis (pen name of Charles Lutwidge Dodgson) (1832-1898) - English novelist, poet, photographer, and mathematician, best known for his fantastical childrens' classics. He was a mathematical lecturer at Oxford.

Fame's Penny-Trumpet (1876) - One of Lewis Carroll's poems. This poem, an attack on men who value money above learning, was privately published by Carroll after numerous rejections. Opening lines: Blow, blow your trumpets till they crack, / Ye little men of little souls

FAME'S PENNY TRUMPET[Affectionately dedicated to all "original researchers" who pant for "endowment".]

BLOW, blow your trumpets till they crack, Ye little men of little souls!

And bid them huddle at your backGold-sucking leeches, shoals on shoals!

Fill all the air with hungry wails "Reward us, ere we think or write!

Without your Gold mere Knowledge fails To sate the swinish appetite!"

And, where great Plato paced serene, Or Newton paused with wistful eye, Rush to the chace with hoofs unclean And Babel-clamour of the sty.

Be yours the pay: be theirs the praise: We will not rob them of their due, Nor vex the ghosts of other days By naming them along with you.

They sought and found undying fame: They toiled not for reward nor thanks: Their cheeks are hot with honest shame For you, the modern mountebanks!

Who preach of Justice- plead with tears That Love and Mercy should abound While marking with complacent ears The moaning of some tortured hound: Who prate of Wisdom- nay, forbear, Lest

Wisdom turn on you in wrath, Trampling, with heel that will not spare,
The vermin that beset her path!

Go, throng each other's drawing-rooms, Ye idols of a petty clique:
Strut your brief hour in borrowed plumes

And make your penny-trumpets squeak: Deck your dull talk with pilfered shreds
Of learning from a nobler time, And oil each other's little heads
With mutual Flattery's golden slime: And when the topmost height ye gain,
And stand in Glory's ether clear, And grasp the prize of all your pain
So many hundred pounds a year
Then let Fame's banner be unfurled!

Sing Paeans for a victory won!

Ye tapers, that would light the world, And cast a shadow on the Sun-
Who still shall pour His rays sublime, One crystal flood, from East to West,
When ye have burned your little time And feebly flickered into rest!

THE END