

Children's Prattle by Hans Christian Andersen (1859) T a rich merchant's house there was a children's party, and the children of rich and great people were there. Her father was groom of the Chambers, which is a high office at court, and she knew it. "I am a child of the court," she said; now she might just as well have been a child of the cellar, for no one can help his birth; and then she told the other children that she was well-born, and said that no one who was not well-born could rise in the world. It was no use to read and be industrious, for if a person was not well-born, he could never achieve anything. We must put our arms akimbo, and make the elbow quite pointed, so as to keep these 'sen' people at a great distance. "All sorts of people are afraid of him, my mamma says, for he can do as he likes with the paper." And the little maiden looked exceedingly proud, as if she had been a real princess, who may be expected to look proud. But outside the door, which stood ajar, was a poor boy, peeping through the crack of the door. He was of such a lowly station that he had not been allowed even to enter the room. He had been turning the spit for the cook, and she had given him permission to stand behind the door and peep in at the well-dressed children, who were having such a merry time within; and for him that was a great deal. His parents at home had not even a penny to spare to buy a newspaper, much less could they write in one; and worse than all, his father's name, and of course his own, ended in "sen," and therefore he could never turn out well, which was a very sad thought. He had really become something great, although his name ended in "sen,"--for it was Thorwaldsen. And the three other children--the children of good birth, of money, and of intellectual pride,--well, they were respected and honored in the world, for they had been well provided for by birth and position, and they had no cause to reproach themselves with what they had thought and spoken on that evening long ago, for, after all, it was mere "children's prattle." All descriptions of people visited at the merchant's house, well born, as well as intellectual, and some who possessed neither of these recommendations.