

MICHAEL KOHLHAAS

By Heinrich Von Kleist

On the banks of the Havel, about the middle of the sixteenth century, lived a horse-dealer, named Michael Kohlhaas. He was the son of a schoolmaster, and was one of the most honest, while at the same time he was one of the most terrible persons of his period. Till his thirtieth year this extraordinary man might have passed as a pattern of a good citizen. In a village, which still bears his name, he held a farm, on which, by means of his business, he was enabled to live quietly. The children whom his wife bore him, he brought up in the fear of God to honesty and industry; and there was not one among his neighbours who had not felt the benefit of his kindness or his sense of justice. In short, the world might have blessed his memory had he not carried one virtue to too great an extreme. The feeling of justice made him a robber and a murderer.

He was once riding abroad, with a string of young horses, all sleek and well-fed, and was calculating how he should expend the profit which he hoped to make in the markets--apportioning part, like a good manager, to gain further profit, and part to present enjoyment--when he came to the Elbe, and found, by a stately castle in the Saxon dominion, a toll-bar, which he had never seen on this road. He at once stopped with his horses, while the rain was pouring down, and called to the toll-taker, who soon, with a very cross face, peeped out of window. The horse-dealer asked him to open the road. "What new fashion is this?" said he, when, after a considerable time, the collector came out of his house. "A sovereign privilege," was his reply, as he unlocked the bar, "granted to the Squire[2] Wenzel von Tronka." "So," said Kohlhaas, "Wenzel's the squire's name, is it?"--and he looked at the castle, which, with its glittering battlements, peered over the field. "Is the old master dead?" "Of an apoplexy," answered the collector, as he lifted up the bar. "That's a pity!" said Kohlhaas. "He was a worthy old gentleman, who took delight in the intercourse of

men, and helped business when he could. Aye, once he had a dam built of stone, because a mare of mine broke her leg yonder, where the way leads to the village. Now, how much?" he asked, and with difficulty drew out from his mantle, which fluttered in the wind, the groschen required by the collector. "Aye, old man," said he, as the other muttered, "make haste," and cursed the weather.--"If the tree from which this bar was fashioned had remained in the wood, it would have been better for both of us." Having paid the money, he would have pursued his journey, but scarcely had he passed the bar than he heard behind him a new voice calling from the tower:

"Ho, there, horse-dealer!" and saw the castellan shut the window, and hasten down to him. "Now, something else new!" said Kohlhaas to himself, stopping with his horses. The castellan, buttoning a waistcoat over his spacious stomach, came, and standing aslant against the rain, asked for his passport. "Passport!" cried Kohlhaas; adding, a little puzzled, that he had not one about him, to his knowledge; but that he should like to be told what sort of a thing it was as he might perchance be provided with one, notwithstanding. The castellan, eyeing him askance, remarked, that without a written permission no horse-dealer, with horses, would be allowed to pass the border. The horse-dealer asserted that he had crossed the border seventeen times in the course of his life without any such paper; that he knew perfectly all the seignorial privileges which belonged to his business; that this would only prove a mistake, and that he, therefore, hoped he might be allowed to think it over; and, as his journey was long, not be detained thus uselessly any further. The castellan answered that he would not escape the eighteenth time; that the regulation had but lately appeared, and that he must either take a passport here or return whence he had come. The horse-dealer, who began to be nettled at these illegal exactions, dismounted from his horse, after reflecting for a while, and said he would speak to the Squire von Tronka himself. He accordingly went up to the castle, followed by the castellan, who muttered something about stingy money-scrappers, and the utility of bleeding

them, and both, measuring each other with their looks, entered the hall.

The squire, as it happened, was drinking with some boon companions, and they all burst out into a ceaseless fit of laughter at some jest, when Kohlhaas approached to state his grievance. The squire asked him what he wanted, while the knights, eyeing the stranger, remained still; yet hardly had he begun his request concerning the horses, than the whole company cried out--"Horses! where are they?" and ran to the window to see them. No sooner had they set eyes on the sleek lot than, on the motion of the squire, down they flew into the court-yard. The rain had ceased; castellan, bailiff and servants, were collected around, and all surveyed the animals. One praised the sorrel with the white spot on his forehead, another liked the chesnut, a third patted the dappled one with tawney spots, and agreed that the horses were like so many stags, and that none better could be reared in the country. Kohlhaas, in high spirits, replied that the horses were no better than the knights who should ride them, and asked them to make a purchase. The squire, who was greatly taken with the strong sorrel stallion, asked the price, while the bailiff pressed him to buy a pair of blacks which he thought might be usefully employed on the estate; but when the horse-dealer named his terms, the knights found them too high, and the squire said that he might ride to the round table and find King Arthur if he fixed such prices as these. Kohlhaas, who saw the castellan and the bailiff whisper together, as they cast most significant glances on the blacks, left nothing undone, actuated as he was by some dark foreboding, to make them take the horses.

"See sir," he said to the squire, "I bought the blacks for five-and-twenty gold crowns, six months ago. Give me thirty and they are yours."

Two of the knights, who stood near the squire, said plainly enough that the horses were well worth the money; but the squire thought that he might buy the sorrel, while he objected to take the blacks, and

made preparations to depart, when Kohlhaas, saying that they would conclude a bargain the next time he went that way with his horses, bade farewell to the squire, and took his horse's bridle to ride off. At this moment the castellan stepped forward from the rest, and said that he had told him he could not travel without a passport. Kohlhaas, turning round, asked the squire whether this really was the case, adding that it would prove the utter destruction of his business. The squire, somewhat confused, answered as he withdrew,

"Yes, Kohlhaas, you must have a pass; speak about it with the castellan, and go your way." Kohlhaas assured him that he had no notion of evading such regulations as might be made respecting the conveyance of horses, promised, in his way through Dresden, to get a pass from the secretary's office, and begged that he might, on this occasion, be allowed to go on, as he knew nothing of the requisition. "Well," said the squire, while the storm broke out anew and rattled against his thin limbs, "Let the fellow go. Come," said he to his knights, and moving round, he was proceeding to the castle. The castellan, however, turning to him said that Kohlhaas must at least leave some pledge that he would get the passport. The squire, upon this, remained standing at the castle-gate, while Kohlhaas asked what security in money or in kind he should leave on account of the black horses. The bailiff mumbled out that he thought the horses themselves might as well be left. "Certainly," said the castellan, "That is the best plan. When he has got the pass he can take them away at any time."

Kohlhaas, astounded at so impudent a proposition, told the squire, who was shivering and holding his waistcoat tight to his body, that he should like to sell him the blacks; but the latter, as a gust of wind drove a world of rain through the gate, cried out, to cut the matter short, "If he won't leave his horses pitch him over the bar back again!" and so saying, left the spot. The horse-dealer, who saw that he must give way to force, resolved, as he could not do otherwise, to comply with the request, so he unfastened the blacks, and conducted them to a stable which the castellan showed him, left a servant behind, gave him

money, told him to take care of the blacks till his return, and doubting whether, on account of the advances made in breeding, there might not be such a law in Saxony, he continued his journey with the rest of his horses to Leipzig, where he wished to attend the fair.

As soon as he reached Dresden, where, in one of the suburbs he had a house with stables, being in the habit of carrying on his trade from thence with the lesser markets of the country, he went to the secretary's office, and there learned from the councillors, some of whom he knew, what he had expected at first--namely, that the story about the passport was a mere fable. The displeased councillors having, at the request of Kohlhaas, given him a certificate as to the nullity of the requisition, he laughed at the thin squire's jest, though he did not exactly see the purport of it; and, having in a few weeks sold his horses to his satisfaction, he returned to the Tronkenburg without any bitter feeling beyond that at the general troubles of the world. The castellan, to whom he showed the certificate, gave no sort of explanation, but merely said, in answer to the question of the horse-dealer, whether he might have the horses back again, that he might go and fetch them. Already, as he crossed the court-yard, Kohlhaas heard the unpleasant news that his servant, on account of improper conduct, as they said, had been beaten and sent off a few days after he had been left at the Tronkenburg. He asked the young man who gave him this intelligence, what the servant had done, and who had attended the horses in the meanwhile. He replied that he did not know, and opened the stall in which they were kept to the horse-dealer, whose heart already swelled with dark misgivings. How great was his astonishment when, instead of his sleek, well-fed blacks, he saw a couple of skinny, jaded creatures, with bones on which things might have been hung, as on hooks, and manes entangled from want of care; in a word, a true picture of animal misery. Kohlhaas, to whom the horses neighed with a slight movement, was indignant in the highest degree, and asked what had befallen the creatures? The servant answered, that no particular misfortune had befallen them, but that, as there had been a want of draught-cattle, they had been used a little in

the fields. Kohlhaas cursed this shameful and preconcerted act of arbitrary power; but, feeling his own weakness, suppressed his rage, and, as there was nothing else to be done, prepared to leave the robber's nest with his horses, when the castellan, attracted by the conversation, made his appearance, and asked what was the matter.

"Matter!" said Kohlhaas, "who allowed Squire Von Tronka and his people to work in the fields the horses that I left?" He asked if this was humanity, tried to rouse the exhausted beasts by a stroke with a switch, and showed him that they could not move. The castellan, after he had looked at him for awhile, insolently enough said, "Now, there's an ill-mannered clown! Why does not the fellow thank his God that his beasts are still living?" He asked whose business it was to take care of them when the boy had run away, and whether it was not fair that the horses should earn in the fields the food that was given them, and concluded by telling him to cease jabbering, or he would call out the dogs, and get some quiet that way at any rate.

The horse-dealer's heart beat strongly against his waistcoat, he felt strongly inclined to fling the good-for-nothing mass of fat into the mud, and set his foot on his brazen countenance. Yet his feeling of right, which was accurate as a gold balance, still wavered; before the tribunal of his own heart, he was still uncertain whether his adversary was in the wrong; and, while pocketing the affronts, he went to his horses and smoothed down their manes. Silently weighing the circumstances, he asked, in a subdued voice, on what account the servant had been sent away from the castle. The castellan answered that it was because the rascal had been impudent. He had resisted a necessary change of stables, and had desired that the horses of two young noblemen, who had come to Tronkenburg, should remain out all night in the high road. Kohlhaas would have given the value of the horses to have had the servant by him, and to have compared his statement with that of the thick-lipped castellan. He stood awhile and smoothed the tangles out of the manes, bethinking himself what was to be done in his situation, when suddenly the scene changed, and the

Squire Von Tronka, with a host of knights, servants, and dogs, returning from a hare-hunt galloped into the castle-court. The castellan, when the squire asked what had happened, took care to speak first; and, while the dogs at the sight of the stranger were barking at him on one side, with the utmost fury, and the knights on the other side were trying to silence them, he set forth, distorting the matter as much as possible, the disturbance that the horse-dealer had created, because his horses had been used a little. Laughing scornfully, he added that he had refused to acknowledge them as his own. "They are not my horses, your worship!" cried Kohlhaas; "these are not the horses that were worth thirty golden crowns! I will have my sound and well-fed horses." The squire, whose face became pale for a moment, alighted and said, "If the rascal will not take his horses, why let him leave them. Come Gunther, come Hans," cried he, as he brushed the dust from his breeches with his hand. "And, ho! wine there!" he called, as he crossed the threshold with the knights and entered his dwelling. Kohlhaas said that he would rather send for the knacker and have the horses knocked on the head, than he would take them in such a condition to his stable at Kohlhaasenbrück. He left them standing where they were, without troubling himself further about them, and vowing that he would have justice, flung himself on his brown horse, and rode off.

He was just setting off full speed for Dresden, when, at the thought of the servant, and at the complaint that had been made against him at the castle, he began to walk slowly, turned his horse's head before he had gone a thousand paces, and took the road to Kohlhaasenbrück, that, in accordance with his notions of prudence and justice, he might first hear the servant's account of the matter. For a correct feeling, well inured to the defective ways of the world, inclined him, in spite of the affronts he had received, to pass over the loss of his horses, as an equitable result; if, indeed, as the castellan had maintained, it could be proved that his servant was in the wrong. On the other hand, a feeling equally honourable, which gained ground as he rode further, and heard, wherever he stopped, of the wrongs that travellers had to

endure every day at the Tronkenburg, told him, that if the whole affair was a concerted scheme--as, indeed, it seemed to be--it was his duty to use every effort to obtain satisfaction for the affronts he had endured, and to secure his fellow-citizens for the future.

As soon as, on his arrival at Kohlhaasenbrück, he had embraced his good wife Lisbeth, and kissed his children, who sported about his knees, he inquired after his head servant, Herse, and whether any thing had been heard of him.

"Yes, dearest Michael," said Lisbeth, "and only think--that unfortunate Herse came here about a fortnight ago, beaten most barbarously--aye, so beaten, that he could scarcely breathe. We took him to bed, when he spat a good deal of blood, and, in answer to our repeated questions, told a story which none of us could understand;--how he was left behind by you at the Tronkenburg with the horses, which were not allowed to pass, how he was forced, by the most shameful ill-usage, to leave the castle, and how he was unable to bring the horses with him."

"Indeed!" said Kohlhaas, putting off his mantle, "is he recovered now?"

"Tolerably," she answered, "with the exception of the spitting of blood. I wished immediately to send a servant to the Tronkenburg, to take care of the horses till you went there, for Herse has always been so honest, indeed so much more faithful to us than any one else, that I never thought of doubting a statement supported by so many evident signs of truth, or of believing that he had lost the horses in any other way. Yet he entreated me not to counsel any one to show himself in that robber's nest, and to give up the horses, if I would not sacrifice a human being."

"Is he still in bed?" asked Kohlhaas, loosening his neckcloth.

"For the last few days he has gone about in the court," she answered-- "in short, you will see that all is true enough, and that this affair is one of the atrocities which the people at the Tronkenburg have lately perpetrated against strangers."

"That I must look into," said Kohlhaas. "Call him here, Lisbeth, if he is up." With these words he sat himself down, while the housewife, who was pleased to see him so forbearing, went and fetched the servant.

"What have you been doing at the Tronkenburg?" asked Kohlhaas, as Lisbeth entered the room with him. "I am not well pleased with you." The servant, in whose pale face a spot of red appeared at these words, was silent for a while, and then said--

"You are right, master, for I flung into the Elbe a match, which, by God's providence, I had with me, to set on fire the robber's nest, from which I was driven, as I heard a child crying within, and thought to myself--'God's lightning may consume it, but I will not.'"

"But what did you do to be sent away from the Tronkenburg?" said Kohlhaas, much struck.

"It was on account of a bad piece of business," said Herse, wiping the perspiration from his forehead; "but no matter, 'what can't be cured must be endured.' I would not allow the horses to be ruined by field work, and told them they were still young, and had never been used for drawing."

Kohlhaas, endeavouring to conceal the perturbation of his mind, observed, that Herse had not quite told the truth in this instance, as the horses had been in harness a little during the preceding spring. "As you were a kind of guest at the castle, you might have obliged them once or twice, when they were forced to get in their harvest as quickly as they could."

"So I did, master," replied Herse, "I thought, as they began to make wry faces, that it would not cost us the horses, at all events. On the third morning I put them too, and brought in three loads of corn."

Kohlhaas, whose heart swelled, fixed his eyes on the ground, and said, "They told me nothing of that, Herse."

The man, however, assured him that it was so. "My incivility," he said, "consisted in this: that I would not allow the horses to be yoked again, when they had scarcely taken their feed at noon, and that when the castellan and the bailiff told me to take fodder gratis, and to pocket the money which had been given me, I gave them a short answer, turned on my heel, and walked off."

"But," said Kohlhaas, "it was not for this incivility that you were sent away from the Tronkenburg."

"God forbid!" said the man, "it was on account of a rascally piece of injustice. For in the evening, the horses of two knights, who had come to the Tronkenburg, were put in the stable, and mine were tied to the stable-door. And when I took the horses out of the hand of the castellan, and asked him where they were to be kept, he showed me a pigsty, built with boards and laths against the castle wall."

"You mean," interrupted Kohlhaas, "that it was such a bad place for horses, that it was more like a pigsty than a stable."

"I mean a pigsty, master," said Herse, "really and truly a pigsty, where the pigs ran in and out, and in which I could not stand upright."

"Perhaps there was no other place for the horses," observed Kohlhaas, "and those of the knights had, in some measure, the preference."

"The place," answered the servant, dropping his voice, "was indeed narrow. Seven knights in all were stopping at the castle; but if it had been you--you would have put the horses a little closer together. I said that I would try to hire a stable in the village, but the castellan objected that he must have the horses under his own eye, and that I must not venture to move them from the yard."

"Hem!" said Kohlhaas, "what did you do then?"

"Why, as the bailiff told me that the two guests would only stop over the night, and would leave the next morning, I led the horses into the sty. But the next day passed, and nothing of the kind took place; and when the third came, I heard the visitors would remain at the castle for some weeks."

"Then, in the end," said Kohlhaas, "it was not so bad in the pigsty, as it seemed, when first you looked into it."

"True," replied Herse, "when I had swept the place a bit, it was passable. Then I gave the girl a groschen to put the pigs somewhere else, and during the day, at least, I managed to let the horses stand upright, for I took off the boards at the top, when the morning dawned, and put them on again in the evening. They peeped out of the roof like so many geese, and looked after Kohlhaasenbrück, or some place at any rate, where they would be better off."

"But now," said Kohlhaas, "why in the world did they send you away?"

"Because, master," replied the man, "they wanted to get rid of me; because, as long as I was there, they could not ruin the horses. In the yard, and in the servants' room, they always made queer faces at me, and because I thought 'you may twist your mouths out of joint, if you like,' they managed to find a pretext, and turned me out of the yard."

"But the reason," said Kohlhaas, "they must have had some reason."

"Oh, certainly," replied Herse, "and a very good one too. On the evening of the second day which I had passed in the sty, I took the horses, which had become dirty, and was going to ride them out to water. When I was just at the gate, and was about to turn, I heard the castellan and the bailiff, with servants, dogs, and sticks, rush upon me from the servants' room, and shout out 'Stop the thief, stop the hangdog!' as if they were all possessed. The gate-keeper intercepted my passage, and when I asked him and the uproarious mob what was the matter, the castellan, seizing the bridle of the two horses, cried, 'Matter, indeed! Where are you going with the horses?' and so saying, seized me by the collar. Why, where should I be going?' said I, 'I am going to water the horses.' 'Oh, to water!' cried the castellan, 'I'll water you! I'll teach you to swim on the high road all the way to Kohlhaasenbrück.' Upon this, he and the bailiff, who had laid hold of my leg, flung me treacherously from the horse, so that I lay full length in the mud. 'Murder!' shouted I, 'There are the harness, and the horse-cloths, and a bundle of linen belonging to me in the stable.' But the castellan and the servants, while the bailiff led off the horses, belaboured me with whips, and cudgels, and kicks, till I fell down, half dead, at the gate. And when I said, 'Where are the thievish rogues taking the horses?' and got up, 'Out of the castle-yard!' cried the castellan. 'Ho, there, Cæsar!--Ho, Touzer!--Ho, Pincher!' and straight more than a dozen dogs flew at me. At this I broke a stick or something from the fence, and lay three of the dogs dead at my feet; but when, tortured by their fangs, I was forced to give way, 'Phew!' went a pipe--the dogs were in the yard--bang went the gate--the bolt was drawn, and down in the road I fell, quite exhausted."

Kohlhaas, though his face was white, affected a jocose style, and said, "Now, did not you wish to abscond, Herse?" and when the man, colouring, looked on the ground, he added, "Now confess, you did not like the pigsty, you thought the stable in Kohlhaasenbrück much better--did you not?" "Thunder of Heaven!" exclaimed Herse, "I left

the harness and horse-cloths, and the bundle of linen in the sty. Should I not have secured the three crowns which I left in the red silk neckerchief, hid behind the manger? Death and the devil!--When you talk so, you make me wish to light that match again which I threw away;" "Nay, nay," said Kohlhaas, "I did not mean so ill with you, I believe every word you have spoken, and if there is any talk about it, I will take the sacrament upon it; I am only sorry that you fared no better in my service. Go to bed, Herse; go to bed. Take a flask of wine and comfort yourself--you shall have justice." He then rose, asked for a list of the things which the man had left in the sty, specified their value; asked him the expenses of curing his hurt, and, after shaking hands with him, let him go.

He then told his wife, Lisbeth, the whole particulars of the affair; said that he was resolved to claim public justice, and was pleased to see that in this design she fully agreed with him. For she said that many other travellers, probably less forbearing than he, would go by that castle, that it would be a pious work to stop disorders like these, and that she would soon collect enough for the expenses of the suit. Kohlhaas called her a dear woman, passed this and the following day with her and his children, and, as soon as business allowed, went to Dresden to make his complaint before the tribunal.

Then with the help of a lawyer of his acquaintance he drew up a petition, in which, after a circumstantial statement of the wrong which the Squire Wenzel von Tronka had done both to him, and his servant Herse, he claimed that he should be punished according to law, that his horses should be restored to their former condition, and that compensation should be awarded for the wrong which he and his servant had suffered. The case was clear enough, the fact that the horses had been illegally detained threw a light on all the rest, and even if it were assumed that they had been injured merely by chance, the claim of their owner to have them back in a healthy condition, was nevertheless just. Besides Kohlhaas had plenty of good friends at Dresden, who promised heartily to support his cause, his extensive

trade in horses had gained him a numerous acquaintance, and the honesty of his dealings had acquired him the good will of the most important men in the country. He frequently dined with his advocate, who was himself a man of consequence, gave him a sum to defray the law expenses, and being fully satisfied by him as to the issue of the suit, returned, after a few weeks to his wife at Kohlhaasenbrück. However months passed on, and the year was nearly at an end, and he had not yet got from Saxony even a statement concerning his suit, much less the decision itself. After he had applied to the tribunal several times anew he asked his legal assistant in a confidential letter, what could be the cause of this monstrous delay, and learned that his suit had been entirely set aside in consequence of a high application to the supreme court at Dresden. In answer to another letter from the horse-dealer, couched in terms of high dissatisfaction, and asking a reason for all this, the jurist replied, that the Squire Wenzel von Tronka was related to two young gentlemen, Herrn Henry and Conrad von Tronka, one of whom was attached to the lord cup-bearer, while the other was chamberlain. He advised him, without proceeding further in the suit, to try to get his horses back from the Tronkenburg, gave him to understand that the squire, who was now in the capital, had ordered his people to return them, and finally entreated him, if he would not be satisfied, at any-rate not to give him (the writer) any further commissions relative to the matter.

At this time, Kohlhaas happened to be in Brandenburg, where the town-governor (Stadt-hauptmann) Heinrich von Geusau, to whose jurisdiction Kohlhaasenbrück belonged, was occupied in founding several charitable institutions for the poor and sick, a considerable sum, which had come into the possession of the city, being appropriated for that purpose. Above all he was endeavouring to convert a mineral spring, the source of which was in a neighbouring village, and concerning the virtues of which higher expectations were raised than were fulfilled by the parties, to the use of invalids, and as Kohlhaas, in consequence of many transactions he had had with him, during his sojourn at the court, was well known to him, he allowed the

servant Herse, who had not been able to breathe without a pain in the chest since the unlucky day at Tronkenburg, to try the little spring, which was now enclosed and roofed over. Now it chanced that the governor was standing by the bath, in which Herse was laid by Kohlhaas, to make certain arrangements, when the horse-dealer received by a messenger, sent by his wife, the disheartening letter from his advocate at Dresden. The governor, who while he was talking with the physician, saw Kohlhaas drop a tear on the letter he had just received and opened, went up to him in a kind manner, and asked him what misfortune had happened; and when the horse-dealer, instead of answering, put the letter in his hand, this worthy man, to whom the abominable wrong, which had been done at the Tronkenburg, and in consequence of which Herse lay ill before him, perhaps for life, was well known, slapped him on the shoulder, and bid him not to be disheartened, as he would aid him to obtain justice. In the evening, when the horse-dealer, in compliance with his instructions, called upon him at his castle, he told him that he need only draw up a petition to the Elector of Brandenburg, with a short statement of facts, attach to it the advocate's letter, and claim seigniorial protection on account of the violence he had suffered in the Saxon territory. He promised to enclose the petition in a packet, which lay ready at hand, and thus to put it into the hands of the elector, who would certainly, on his own account, apply to the Elector of Saxony, as soon as circumstances permitted. Such a step was all that was wanted to obtain justice from the tribunal at Dresden, in spite of the tricks of Squire von Tronka and his adherents. Kohlhaas, highly delighted, thanked the governor most heartily, for this new proof of kindness, told him he was only sorry that he had not at once commenced proceedings at Berlin, without taking any steps at Dresden, and after he had duly prepared the petition in the secretary's office, and had handed it over to the governor, he returned to Kohlhaasenbrück better satisfied than ever as to the prospects of the affair. In a few weeks, however, he had the mortification of learning, through a judge, who was going to Potsdam, about some affairs of the governor, that the elector had handed over the petition to his

chancellor, Count Kallheim, and that the latter, instead of going immediately to the court at Dresden to examine the matter and inflict punishment, as seemed to be his duty, had first applied for information to Squire von Tronka himself. The judge,[3] who stopped in his carriage before Kohlhaas's door, and who seemed to have been expressly commissioned to make this communication, could give no satisfactory answer to the question of his surprise: "But why did they act in this way?" he merely said, that the governor had sent word, begging him to be patient, appeared anxious to pursue his journey, and it was not till the end of a short conversation, that Kohlhaas learned by a few stray words, that Count Kallheim was related by marriage to the von Tronka's. Kohlhaas, who no longer took any delight in attending his horses, or in his house and farm--scarcely in his wife and children--waited the arrival of the following month with the gloomiest misgivings, and it was quite in accordance with his expectations, that when the interval was passed, Herse, who had been in some measure relieved by the bath, returned from Brandenburg with a letter from the governor, accompanying a paper of larger dimensions. The letter was to the effect that the writer was sorry he could do nothing for him, but that he sent him a decree of the chancery, and advised him to take away the horses, which he had left at Tronkenburg, and let the whole matter drop. According to the decree, "he was a vexatious litigant, on the information of the tribunal at Dresden; the squire with whom he had left the horses did nothing to detain them; he might send to the castle and fetch them, or at any rate let the squire know where he was to send them, and at all events he was to abstain from troubling the court with such wranglings." Kohlhaas, to whom the horses were not the chief object--had it been a couple of dogs he would have been equally mortified--literally foamed with rage when he had received this letter. Whenever there was a noise in his farm, he looked with the sickening sensation which had even stirred his heart towards the gate, expecting to see the squire's servants, with his horses starved and worn out; this was the only case in which his mind, otherwise well-trained by the world, could find nothing that exactly corresponded with his feelings. Shortly

afterwards he learned by means of an acquaintance, who had travelled that way, that the horses were still used with the squire's at Tronkenburg for field labour, and in the midst of his pain at seeing the world in such a state of disorder, there arose a feeling of inner contentment as he found there was at least something like order in his own heart. He invited the proprietor[4] of the neighbouring lands, who had long entertained the notion of increasing his possessions by purchasing the pieces of ground adjoining, and asked him, when he had taken a seat, what he would give him for his estates in Brandenburg and Saxony, taking house and farm all in the lump, with or without fixtures. His wife Lisbeth turned pale as she heard these words. Turning round she took up the youngest child, who was sporting on the floor behind her, and darted at the horse-dealer, and a paper which he held in his hand, glances, in which doubt was depicted, and which passed across the red cheeks of the boy, who was playing with the ribbons on her neck. The farmer, who observed his confused manner, asked him what had put so strange a thought all at once into his head. Kohlhaas, with as much cheerfulness as he could assume, replied that the notion of selling his farm on the banks of the Havel was not quite new, that they had both often discussed this matter already, that his house in the suburbs of Dresden was comparatively a mere appendage, not to be considered, and finally that if he would comply with his offer and take both estates, he was quite ready to conclude the contract. He added, with a kind of forced levity, that Kohlhaasenbrück was not the world; that there might be purposes, in comparison with which that of presiding over one's household, like an orderly father, was trivial and subordinate, and that in short his mind, as he was bound to say, was set upon great matters, of which perhaps the farmer would soon hear. The farmer satisfied with this explanation, said merrily to the wife, who kissed her child again and again: "He won't want immediate payment, will he?" and then laying upon the table the hat and stick he had hitherto carried between his knees, he took the paper which Kohlhaas had in his hand to read it. Kohlhaas moving closer to him, explained that this was a conditional contract which he had drawn up, and which would

become absolute in four weeks; showed that nothing was required but the signatures and the filling in of the two sums, namely, the purchase-money and the price of redemption, in case he should return within the four weeks, and again asked him in a cheerful tone to make an offer, assuring him that he would be reasonable, and would not hesitate about trifles. The wife walked up and down in the room, her heart palpitating to such a degree that her handkerchief, at which the child was pulling, seemed ready to fall from her shoulders. The farmer said that he had no means of estimating the value of the Dresden property, whereupon Kohlhaas, pushing to him the documents that had been exchanged when he had purchased it, replied that he valued it at one hundred gold crowns, although it appeared clearly enough from the documents themselves, that it cost him almost half as much again. The farmer, who read the contract over once more, and found that on his side also the liberty of retracting was specially provided, said, already half determined, that he could not make use of the stud that was in the stables; but when Kohlhaas replied that he did not wish to part with the horses, and that he also wished to keep some weapons that hung in the gun-room, he hemmed and hesitated for a while, and at last repeated an offer which, half in jest, half in earnest, he had made in the course of a walk, and which was as nothing compared to the value of the property. Kohlhaas pushed pen and ink towards him that he might write, and when the farmer, who could not trust his senses, asked the horse-dealer if he was really serious, and the horse-dealer somewhat sharply asked the farmer if he thought he could be in jest, the latter, with a somewhat scrupulous countenance, took up the pen and wrote. He struck out the part relating to the sum to be paid, in case the vendor should repent his bargain, bound himself to a loan of one hundred crowns on the security of the Dresden property, which he would on no account consent to purchase, and left Kohlhaas full liberty to recede from his contract within two months. The horse-dealer, touched by this handsome conduct, shook the farmer's hand very heartily, and after they had agreed on the chief condition, which was that a fourth of the purchase-money should be paid in cash down, and the rest at the Hamburg bank three months afterwards, he called

for wine, that they might make merry over a bargain so happily concluded. He told the servant-maid, who entered with bottles, that his man Sternbald was to saddle the chesnut horse, saying that he must ride to the city, where he had business to transact, and hinting that when he returned he would speak more openly about that which he must now keep secret. Then filling the glasses he asked about the Poles and the Turks, who were then at war with each other, entangled the farmer into all sorts of political conjectures on the subject, and finally took a parting glass to the success of their bargain, and dismissed him.

No sooner had the farmer left the room, than Lisbeth fell on her knees before her husband. "If," she cried, "you still retain any feeling for me, and for the children which I bore you; if we are not already cast off-- for what cause I know not--tell me what is the meaning of these frightful preparations?"

"Nothing, dearest wife, that can trouble you, as matters stand," answered Kohlhaas. "I have received a decree, in which I am told that my proceeding against Squire von Tronka is mere vexatious wrangling; and because there must be some misunderstanding in this matter, I have determined to commence my suit once more, personally, with the sovereign of the country himself."

"But why sell your house?" she exclaimed, as she rose from the ground in confusion.

The horse-dealer, gently embracing her, replied: "Because, dearest Lisbeth, I will not abide in a country in which my rights are not protected. If I am to be trampled under foot, I would rather be a dog than a man. I am certain that, on this point, my wife thinks with me."

"But how do you know," she asked, wildly, "that they will not protect you in your rights? If you approach our sovereign as modestly as you

ought, with your petition, how do you know that it will be cast aside, or answered with a refusal to hear you?"

"Well then," answered Kohlhaas, "if my fear turns out to be groundless, my house, at any rate, is yet unsold. Our sovereign himself, I know, is just; and if I can succeed in approaching his person, through the people who surround him, I have no doubt I can obtain my rights, and before the week has passed, can return gladly to you and my old business back again. May I then," he added, as he kissed her, "remain with you till the end of my life! However," he continued, "it is advisable that I should be prepared for every event, and hence I wish you to leave this place for a time, if possible, and to go, with your children, to your aunt at Schwerin, whom you have been long anxious to visit?"

"How," cried the wife. "I go to Schwerin?--I cross the border with my children, to go to my aunt at Schwerin?" And her voice was stifled with horror.

"Certainly," replied Kohlhaas, "and, if possible, immediately, that I may not be impeded in the steps I am about to take in this matter."

"Oh, I understand you," she exclaimed. "You want nothing but weapons and horses; the rest any one may take who will." And so saying, she threw herself down upon a seat and wept.

Kohlhaas, much perplexed, said: "Dearest Lisbeth, what are you doing? God has blessed me with wife, children, and property; shall I wish, for the first time, that it was otherwise?" And he sat down by her in a kindly mood, while she, at these words, fell blushing on his neck. "Tell me," he said, moving the curls from her forehead, "what I am to do? Shall I give up my cause? Shall I go to Tronkenburg, and ask the knight for my horses, mount them, and then ride home to you?"

Lisbeth did not venture to answer "Yes;" she shook her head, weeping, clasped him fervently, and covered his breast with burning kisses.

"Good!" cried Kohlhaas. "Then, if you feel that I must have justice, if I am to carry on my business, grant me the liberty which is necessary to attain it." Upon this he rose up, and said to the servant, who told him that his chestnut horse was saddled, that the horses must be put in harness the following day, to take his wife to Schwerin. Suddenly Lisbeth saying that a thought had struck her, raised herself, wiped the tears from her eyes, and asked him, as he sat down at a desk, whether he could not give her the petition, and let her go to Dresden instead of him, to present it to the sovereign.

Kohlhaas, struck by this sudden turn, for more reasons than one, drew her to him, and said: "Dearest wife, that is impossible! The sovereign is surrounded by many obstacles, and to many annoyances is the person exposed who ventures to approach him."

Lisbeth replied that the approach would be a thousand times easier for a woman than for a man. "Give me the petition," she repeated; "and if you wish nothing more than to know that it is in his hands, I will vouch for it."

Kohlhaas, who had frequently known instances of her courage as well as of her prudence, asked her how she intended to set about it. Upon which she told him, hanging down her head abashed, that the castellan of the electoral castle had formerly courted her, when she served at Schwerin; that it was true he was now married, and had many children, but that she might still not be quite forgotten--in short, she asked him leave to take advantage of this and other circumstances, which it would be superfluous to name. Kohlhaas kissed her right joyously, told her that he accepted her proposition, and that nothing more was wanted than for her to stay with the castellan's wife, to secure an interview with the sovereign, gave her the petition, had the

brown horses harnessed, and sent her off, safely stowed under the care of his faithful servant, Sternbald.

Of all the unsuccessful steps which he had taken in the affair this journey proved the most unlucky. For, in a few days, Sternbald returned to the farm, leading slowly along the vehicle in which Lisbeth lay stretched, with a dangerous bruise on her breast. Kohlhaas, who approached it pale and terrified, could learn nothing connected as to the cause of this calamity. The castellan, according to the servant's account, had not been at home, they had, therefore, been obliged to put up at an inn in the vicinity of the castle; this inn Lisbeth had left on the following morning, and had told the man to remain with the horses; it was not till the evening that she returned, in the condition in which she was seen. It appeared that she had pressed forward too boldly towards the sovereign, and that, without any fault on his part, she had received a blow on the breast, from the shaft of a lance, through the rude zeal of one of the guards who surrounded him. At least so said the people who, in the evening, brought her to the inn in a state of insensibility, for she herself could speak but little, being prevented by the blood that flowed from her mouth. The petition was afterwards taken from her by a knight. Sternbald said that he had wished immediately to set out on horseback and inform his master of the misfortune that had happened, but that, in spite of all the representations of the surgeon who had been called, she had insisted on being conveyed to her husband at Kohlhaasenbrück. The journey had quite exhausted her, and Kohlhaas put her in a bed, where she laid some days striving with difficulty to draw her breath. Vain were all endeavours to restore her to consciousness, that she might throw some light on the events; she lay with her eyes fixed, and already glazed, and returned no answer. Only once, just before her death did she recover her senses. For, as a minister of the Lutheran religion (to which newly springing faith she had attached herself, through the example of her husband) was standing at her bed-side, and with a loud and solemn voice was reading to her a chapter out of the bible, she looked at him suddenly, with a dark expression, took the bible out of

his hand, as if there were nothing in it to be read to her, turned the leaves over and over, as if she were looking for something, and at last pointed out to Kohlhaas, who sat by the bed, the verse: "Forgive thine enemies--do good unto them that hate thee!" She then pressed his hand, with a most significant glance, and expired. "May God never forgive me as I forgive the squire," thought Kohlhaas--and he kissed her, while his tears were flowing fast, closed her eyes and rushed out of the room. The hundred golden crowns, which the farmer had already advanced him on the Dresden stables he took, and bespoke a funeral which seemed less fitted for Lisbeth than for a princess. The coffin was of oak, strongly cased with metal, the cushions were of silk with gold and silver tassels, and the grave, which was eight ells deep, was lined with stones and lime. He himself, with his youngest child in his arms, stood by the grave, and watched the progress of the work. When the day of burial came the corpse was laid out, as white as snow, in a room, which he had lined with black cloth. The minister had just finished a touching discourse by the bier, when the sovereign's decree in answer to the petition, which the deceased had presented, was put in the hands of Kohlhaas. The purport was, that he should fetch the horses from the Tronkenburg, and make no further applications in this matter under pain of imprisonment. Kohlhaas put up the letter, and ordered the coffin to be placed on the bier. As soon as the mound was raised, the cross was set upon it, and the guests, who had assisted at the funeral had been dismissed, he threw himself down once more before his wife's deserted bed, and then commenced the work of revenge. Taking a seat, he drew up a decree, in which, by virtue of his innate power, he condemned the Squire Wenzel von Tronka, within three days after the sight thereof, to bring back to Kohlhaasenbrück the horses which he had taken, and which he had spoiled by field-work, and to feed them in person in his stables until they were restored to their good condition. This paper he conveyed by a messenger on horseback, whom he instructed to return to Kohlhaasenbrück immediately after he had delivered it. The three days having passed and no horses having been delivered, he called Herse to him, informed him of the notice he had given to the squire

concerning the feeding, and asked him which of two things he would do: whether he would go with him to the Tronkenburg and fetch the squire, or whether, when he was brought him, he would hold the whip over him, in case he should prove lazy in obeying the decree in the Kohlhaasenbrück stables. Herse shouted out, "Let us begin to-day, master," and flinging his cap into the air swore that he would have a thong twisted into ten knots to teach the art of currying. Kohlhaas sold his house, sent his children in a vehicle over the border, called, in addition to Herse, the rest of his servants, seven in number, and all as true as steel, at the approach of night, armed them, mounted them, and set off for the Tronkenburg.

The third night was advancing, when with his little band, riding over the toll-taker and the gate-keeper, who stood conversing by the gate, he fell upon the Tronkenburg. While, amid the crackling of the outbuildings, which the men set on fire, Herse flew up the winding staircase to the castellan's tower, and cut and thrust at the castellan and the bailiff, who were at play, half undressed. Kohlhaas rushed into the castle to find Squire Wenzel. So does the angel of judgment descend from Heaven, and the squire, who, amid peals of laughter, was reading to a party of young friends, the decree, which the horse-dealer had sent him, no sooner heard his voice in the yard, than he cried to the rest, pale as death, "Save yourselves, brothers!" and vanished immediately. Kohlhaas, who, on entering the hall, seized by the breast and flung into the corner, one Squire Hans von Tronka, who was advancing towards him, so that his brains were scattered on the stones, asked, while his servants overpowered and dispersed the other knights, who had taken up their weapons: "Where is Squire von Tronka?" And when, as the astounded knights professed their ignorance, he had, with a blow of his foot, burst open the doors of two rooms, which led into the wings of the castle, and after searching the spacious building in all directions, still found nobody, he went, cursing down into the yard, that he might guard every egress. In the meanwhile, ignited by the flames of the outbuildings, the castle itself, with all its wings, took fire, and threw volumes of black smoke to the

skies, and while Sternbald, with three active fellows, dragged together all they could lay hold of, and flung it upon their horses as lawful prize, the dead bodies of the castellan and the bailiff, with their wives and children, flew out of the upper window, accompanied by the shouts of Herse. Kohlhaas, at whose feet, as he descended the stairs, the squire's gouty old housekeeper threw herself, asked her, as he paused on one of the steps: "Where is Squire von Tronka?" When, with a weak trembling voice, she answered, that she thought he had fled to the chapel; he called for two servants with torches, broke open an entrance with crow-bars and hatchets, for want of a key, and turned upside down the altars and benches. Still no squire was found, to the great grief of Kohlhaas. It happened, just as he was leaving the chapel, that a boy--one of the servants at the Tronkenburg--hurried by to take the squire's coursers out of a large stone stall, that was threatened by the flames. Kohlhaas, who at this moment saw his own two black horses in a little thatched shed, asked the boy, why he did not save them, and when the latter, as he put the key in the stable-door, answered that the shed was already in flames, he tore the key out of the door, flung it over the wall, and driving the boy with a shower of blows from the flat of his sword, into the blazing shed, compelled him to save the horses amid the frightful laughter of the bystanders. When, in a few moments, the boy, pale as death, came with the horses out of the shed that fell behind him, Kohlhaas was no longer there, and when he joined the servants in the yard, and then asked the horse-dealer what he was to do with the animals, Kohlhaas raised his foot with such violence, that it would have been fatal had it reached him, leaped upon his brown horse without giving any answer, went under the castle-gate, and while his men carried on their work, quietly awaited the dawn of day. When morning broke, the whole castle was burned, with the exception of the bare walls, and no one was on the spot but Kohlhaas and his men. He alighted from his horse once more in the bright rays of the sun, searched every corner of the place, and when, hard as it was to be convinced, he saw that his enterprise at the castle had failed, his heart swelling with grief and pain, he sent out Herse with some of the others to obtain intelligence about the direction

which the squire had taken in flight. A rich convent, called Erlabrunn, which was situated on the banks of the Mulde, and the abbess of which, Antonia von Tronka, was well known on the spot as a pious and benevolent lady, rendered him particularly uneasy, for it seemed to him but too probable that the squire, deprived as he was of every necessary of life, had taken refuge in this asylum, since the abbess was his aunt, and had educated him in his earliest years. Kohlhaas being informed of this circumstance, ascended the castellan's tower, within which he found a room that was still habitable, and prepared what he called "Kohlhaasisch Mandate," in which he desired the whole country to give no assistance whatever to Squire von Tronka, with whom he was engaged in lawful war, and bound every inhabitant, not excepting his friends and relations, to deliver up to him the aforesaid squire, under the penalty of life and limb, and conflagration of all that could be called property. This declaration he distributed through the country round, by means of travellers and strangers. To his servant, Waldmann, he gave a copy with the special charge that it was to be put into the hands of the Lady Antonia at Erlabrunn. He afterwards gained over some of the Tronkenburg servants, who were discontented with the squire, and tempted by the prospect of booty, wished to enter his service. These he armed after the fashion of infantry with daggers and cross-bars, teaching them to sit behind the servants on horseback. After having turned into money all that the troops had raked together, and divided the money among them, he rested from his sad occupation for some hours, under the gate of the castle.

Herse returned about noon, and confirmed the gloomy suspicions, which he had already felt in his heart, namely, that the squire was in the convent at Erlabrunn, with his aunt, the lady Antonia von Tronka. He had, it appeared, slipped through a door at the back of the castle, which led into the open air, and gone down a narrow flight of stone steps, which, under a little roof, went down to some boats in the Elbe. At least Herse told him that about midnight he reached a village on the Elbe in a boat without a rudder, to the astonishment of the people,

who were collected together on account of the fire at the Tronkenburg, and that he had proceeded to Erlabrunn in a waggon. Kohlhaas sighed deeply at this intelligence; he asked whether the horses had had their feed, and when his men answered in the affirmative, he ordered the whole troop to mount, and in three hours was before Erlabrunn. While a distant storm was murmuring in the horizon, he entered the convent yard with his band, lighted by torches, which he had kindled before the place. The servant, Waldmann, who met him, told him that he had given the copy of the mandate, when he saw the abbess and the beadle of the convent talking in an agitated manner beneath the portal. The latter, a little old man, with hair as white as snow, darting fierce glances at Kohlhaas, ordered his armour to be put on, and with a bold voice told the servants who stood round him to ring the alarm bell, while the abbess with a silver crucifix in her hand, descended, white as her own garment, from the landing-place, and with all her maidens, threw herself before Kohlhaas's horses. Kohlhaas, himself, while Herse and Sternbald overcame the beadle, who had no sword, and were leading him off away to the horses as a prisoner, asked her: "Where is Squire von Tronka?" When, drawing from her girdle a large bunch of keys, she answered: "At Wittenberg, worthy man," and in a trembling voice, added: "Fear God, and do no wrong," the horse-dealer, cast back into the hell of disappointed revenge, turned about his horse, and was on the point of shouting out: "Set alight!" when a monstrous thunder-bolt fell to the earth at his feet. Kohlhaas, again turning his horse to her, asked if she had received his mandate, and when with a weak and scarcely audible voice, she said: "Only just now, about two hours after my nephew had departed,"--and Waldmann, on whom Kohlhaas cast suspicious glances, stammered out a confirmation of the statement, saying, that the water of the Mulde had been swelled by the rain, and had hindered him from arriving sooner, he collected himself. A sudden fall of rain, which extinguished the torches, and rattled on the stones, seemed to ease the anguish of his wretched heart; he once more turned round, touching his hat to the lady, and crying out: "Brothers, follow me,--the Squire is in Wittenberg," clapped spurs to his horse and left the convent.

At nightfall he put up at an inn on the road, where he had to rest a day on account of the great fatigue of his horses, and as he plainly saw, that with a troop of ten men (such was his force now), he could not attack a place like Wittenberg, he drew up a second mandate, in which, after strictly narrating what had happened to him, he called, to use his own words, "Upon every good Christian to espouse his cause against Squire von Tronka, the common enemy of all Christians, with the promise of a sum of money down, and other advantages of war." In a third mandate he called himself a "Sovereign, free from the empire and the world, subject to God alone;" a morbid and disgusting piece of fanaticism, which nevertheless accompanied as it was with the chink of money and the hope of prey, procured an accession to his numbers from the rabble, whom the peace with Poland had deprived of a livelihood. Indeed his band amounted to upwards of thirty, when he turned back to the left bank of the Elbe to lay Wittenberg in ashes. With his men and horses he took shelter under the roof of an old ruined shed in the depth of a gloomy wood, that in those days surrounded the place, and he no sooner learned from Sternbald, that the mandate, with which he had sent him into the town disguised, had been made known, than he set off with his band--it was Whitsun eve,-and while the inhabitants lay fast asleep, set a-light to the place at many corners. He then, with his men, plundered the suburbs, affixed a paper to the door-post of a church, in which he said that "He, Kohlhaas, had set the city on fire, and that if the squire was not given up to him, he would lay it in ashes in such sort, that he would not have to look behind a wall to find him." The terror of the inhabitants at this unparalleled atrocity was indescribable, and the flames, which in a particularly calm summer's night, had not consumed more than nineteen houses, including a church, being extinguished in some measure about day-break, the old governor (Landvoigt), Otto von Gorgas, sent out a company of about fifty men, to capture the fearful invader. The captain of this company, whose name was Gerstenberg, managed so badly, that the expedition, instead of defeating Kohlhaas, rather helped him to a very dangerous military reputation; for while he

separated his men into several divisions, that he might, as he thought, surround and curb Kohlhaas, he was attacked by the latter, who kept his men close together at the different isolated points, and was so beaten, that on the evening of the following day, not a single man of the whole band was left to face the aggressor, although on that band rested all the hopes of the country. Kohlhaas, who had lost none of his own men in the encounter, fired the town anew on the following morning, and his criminal plans were so well laid that a number of houses, and nearly all the barns of the suburbs were reduced to ashes. He then again posted up his decree, and that in the corners of the town-house, adding an account of the fate of Captain von Gerstenberg, whom the governor had sent out against him, and whom he had demolished. The governor, greatly enraged at this defiance, placed himself with several knights at the head of a band of a hundred and fifty men. To Squire von Tronka, who had sent him a written petition, he gave a guard, to protect him from the violence of the people, who wished him to be turned out of the city without more ado, and after he had posted guards in all the villages around, and also had garrisoned the walls of the city to defend it from a surprise, he set out on St. Gervas's day, to capture the dragon that was thus laying waste the country. The horse-dealer was cunning enough to avoid this troop, and after he had, by his clever retreats, lured away the governor five miles from the city, and had made him believe by various preparations that if pressed by numbers he would throw himself into the Brandenburg territory, he suddenly faced about at the approach of the third night, and galloping back to Wittenberg for the third time to set it on fire. This frightful act of audacity was achieved by Herse, who had entered the city disguised, and the conflagration, through the action of a sharp north wind was so destructive, and extended its ravages so far that in less than three hours, two-and-forty houses, two churches, several schools and convents, and the governor's residence were levelled with the ground. The governor, who believed that his adversary was in Brandenburg, at break of day, found the city in a general uproar, when having been informed of what had passed, he returned by forced marches. The people had assembled by thousands

before the house of Squire von Tronka, which was fortified with boards and palisades, and with the voices of maniacs were demanding that he should be sent out of the city. In vain did two burgomasters, named Jenkins and Otto, who appeared at the head of the whole magistracy, clad in robes of office, show the necessity of waiting for the return of a courier who had been sent to the chancery to ask permission to send the squire to Dresden, whither he himself, for many reasons, wished to be removed; the mob, deaf to reason, and armed with pikes and staves would hear nothing, and they not only ill-used some members of the council, who were urging too severe measures, but they were on the point of tearing down the squire's house, when the governor, Otto von Gorgas, appeared in the city at the head of his troop of horse. This venerable nobleman, whose presence alone had usually awed the people to respect and obedience, had succeeded in capturing three stragglers from the incendiary's band at the very gates of the city, as if by way of compensation for the failure of his enterprise; and as, while these fellows were loaded with chains in sight of the people, he assured the magistrates, in a seasonable address, that he thought he was in a fair way to capture Kohlhaas himself, and in a short time to bring him in, also enchained, he succeeded in disarming the rage of the assembled multitude, and in appeasing them, in some measure, as to the squire's remaining among them, till the return of the courier from Dresden. He alighted from horseback, and with some of his knights, the palisades being removed, he entered the house, where he found the squire, who was continually fainting, in the hands of two physicians, who, by the aid of essences and stimulants, were endeavouring to restore him to consciousness. Herr Otto von Gorgas, feeling that this was not the moment to bandy words with the squire about his bad conduct, merely told him, with a look of silent contempt, to dress himself, and for his own security, to follow him to apartments in the prison. When they had put him on a doublet, and set a helmet on his head, and he appeared in the street with his breast half open for want of air, leaning on the arm of the governor and his brother-in-law, Count von Gerschau, the most frightful imprecations ascended to the skies. The mob, kept back with

difficulty by the soldiers, called him a blood-sucker, a miserable pest to the country, the curse of the city of Wittenberg, and the destruction of Saxony. After a melancholy procession through the ruins, during which the squire often let the helmet drop from his head without missing it, and a knight as often set it on again from behind him, he reached the prison, and vanished into a town under the protection of a strong guard. In the meanwhile, the city was thrown into new alarm by the return of the courier with the electoral decree. For the government, having listened to the applications of the citizens of Dresden, would not hear of the squire taking up his abode in this the chief city, till the incendiary was conquered; but charged the governor to protect him, wherever he might be, and remember he must be content with such forces as he had. He, however, informed the good city of Wittenberg, to allay uneasiness, that a troop of five hundred strong, under the command of Prince Frederic, of Misnia, was advancing to protect it from further molestations by Kohlhaas. The governor plainly saw that a decree of this kind would by no means satisfy the people, since not only had the many little advantages which the horse-dealer had gained at different points before the city, caused most alarming reports to be spread as to his increase of strength, but the war which he carried on in the darkness of night, with pitch, straw, and brimstone, aided by a rabble in disguise, might, unexampled as it was, completely frustrate a greater protective force than that which was coming with the Prince of Misnia. Therefore, after a short reflection, the governor resolved to suppress the decree. He merely posted up against the corners of the city, a letter, in which the Prince of Misnia announced his arrival. A covered cart, which left the prison-yard at break of day, accompanied by four guards on horse-back, heavily armed, passed along the street to Leipzig, the guards causing it to be vaguely reported that it was going to the Pleissenburg. The people being thus appeased as to the ill-fated squire, to whose presence fire and sword were bound, the governor himself set off with a troop of three hundred men, to join Prince Frederic of Misnia. In the meanwhile, Kohlhaas, by the singular position he had taken in the world, had increased his force to a hundred and ten persons; and as he

had procured a good store of arms at Jessen, and had armed his band in the most perfect manner, he was no sooner informed of the double storm, than he resolved to meet it with all possible speed, before it should break over him. Therefore, on the following night he attacked the Prince of Misnia, by Mühlberg, in which encounter, to his great grief, he lost Herse, who fell by his side on the first fire. However, enraged at this loss, he so defeated the prince, who was unable to collect his force together, in a three hours contest, that at break of day, on account of several wounds, and likewise of the total disorder of his men, he was forced to retreat to Dresden. Emboldened by this advantage Kohlhaas turned back upon the governor, before he could have received intelligence of the event, fell upon him in an open field near the village of Damerow in broad daylight, and fought with fury till nightfall, suffering terrible loss, but still with equal advantage. The next morning unquestionably, with the remainder of his force, he would have again attacked the governor, who had thrown himself into the church-yard at Damerow, if the latter had not been informed of the prince's defeat by Mühlberg, and therefore held it advisable once more to return to Wittenberg, and await a better opportunity. Five days after the dispersion of these two forces, Kohlhaas was before Leipzig, and fired the city on three sides. In the mandate which he distributed on this occasion he called himself, "Vicegerent of Michael the Archangel who had come to avenge, with fire and sword, the villany into which the whole world had fallen, on all who had taken the squire's part in this struggle." At the same time from the Lützen Castle, of which he had taken possession, and in which he had established himself, he called upon the people to join him, and bring about a better order of things. The mandate was signed, as if by a sort of madness: "Given at the suit of our provisional world-government,--the Castle of Lützen." Fortunately for the inhabitants of Leipzig, the fire did not catch on account of the continual rain, and moreover the means of extinguishing being used with great promptness, only a few shops about the Pleissenburg burst into flames. Nevertheless the alarm of the city at the presence of the violent incendiary, and his notion that the squire was at Leipzig, was indescribable; and when a body of a

hundred and eighty troopers, who had been sent out against him, returned to the city in confusion, the magistracy, who did not wish to endanger the property of the place, had no other course left them but to close the gates, and set the citizens to watch day and night outside the walls. In vain did they post up declarations in the surrounding villages, that the squire was not in the Pleissenburg; the horse-dealer in similar papers affirmed the contrary, and declared that even if the squire was not in the Pleissenburg, he would nevertheless proceed just in the same manner, until they informed him where he actually was. The elector, instructed by a courier of the peril in which the city of Leipzig stood, stated that he was collecting a force of two thousand men, and that he would put himself at the head of it, to capture Kohlhaas. He severely reproved Otto von Gorgas for the indiscreet stratagem he had employed to remove the incendiary from the neighbourhood of Wittenberg, and no one can describe the alarm which arose in Saxony in general, and in the capital in particular, when the inhabitants learned that an unknown hand had posted up in the villages near Leipzig, a declaration that Squire Wenzel was with his armies at Dresden.

Under these circumstances, Dr. Martin Luther, supported by the authority which he owed to his position in the world, took upon himself by the force of words to call back Kohlhaas into the path of order, and trusting to a suitable element in the heart of the incendiary, caused a placard, worded as follows, to be set up in all the towns and villages of the electorate:

"Kohlhaas--thou who pretendest that thou art deputed to wield the sword of justice, what art thou doing, presumptuous one, in the madness of thy blind passion, thou who art filled with injustice from the crown of thy head to the sole of thy foot? Because thy sovereign, whose subject thou art, hath refused thee justice, dost thou arise in godless man, the cause of worldly good, with fire and sword, and break in like the wolf of the desert upon the peaceful community that he protecteth. Thou, who misleadest mankind by a declaration full of

untruth and craftiness, dost thou believe, sinner that thou art, the same pretext will avail thee before God on that day when the recesses of every heart shall be revealed? How canst thou say that justice hath been denied--thou, whose savage heart, excited by an evil spirit of self-revenge, entirely gave up the trouble of seeking it after the failure of thy first trivial endeavours? Is a bench of beadles and tipstiffs, who intercept letters, or keep to themselves the knowledge they should communicate, the power that ruleth? Must I tell thee, impious man, that thy ruler knoweth nothing of thy affair? What do I say? Why that the sovereign against whom thou rebellest doth not even know thy name, and that when thou appearest before the throne of God, thinking to accuse him, he with a serene countenance will say: 'Lord to this man did I no wrong, for his existence is strange unto my soul.' Know that the sword that thou bearest is the sword of robbery and murder; thou art a rebel and no warrior of the just God. Thine end upon earth is the wheel and the gallows, and thine end hereafter is that condemnation which threateneth the worker of evil and impiety.

"Wittenberg. "MARTIN LUTHER."

In the Castle of Lützen Kohlhaas was meditating, in his diseased mind, a new plan for reducing Leipzig to ashes, paying no attention to the notice set up in the villages, that Squire Wenzel was in Dresden, because it had no signature, though he had required one of the magistrates; when Sternbald and Waldmann perceived with the greatest astonishment the placard that had been set up by night against the gateway of the castle. In vain did they hope for many days that Kohlhaas, whom they did not wish to approach for the purpose, would see it. Gloomy and brooding in his own thoughts, he merely appeared in the evening to give a few short commands, and saw nothing, and hence one morning, when he was about to hang up two of his men, who had been plundering in the neighbourhood against his will, they resolved to attract his attention. He was returning from the place of judgment, with the pomp to which he had accustomed himself since his last mandate, while the people timidly made way on both sides. A

large cherub-sword on a red leather cushion, adorned with gold tassels was carried before him, and twelve servants followed him with burning torches. The two men, with their swords under their arms, walked round the pillar to which the placard was attached, so as to awaken his surprise. Kohlhaas, as with his hands locked behind him, and sunk deep in thought, he came under the portal, raised his eyes and started; and as the men timidly retired from his glance, witnessing the confusion, he approached the pillar with hurried steps. But who shall describe the state of his mind, when he saw upon it the paper which accused him of injustice, signed with the dearest and most revered name that he knew--the name of Martin Luther? A deep red overspread his face; taking off his helmet he read it twice from beginning to end; then with uncertain looks stepped back among his men as if about to say something, and yet said nothing; then took the paper from the wall, read it once more, and cried as he disappeared: "Waldmann get my horses saddled, Sternbald follow me into the castle!" More than these few words was not wanted to disarm him at once among all his purposes of distinction.

He put on the disguise of a Thuringian farmer, told Sternbald that business of importance called him to Wittenberg, entrusted him, in the presence of some of his principal men, with the command of the band left at Lützen, and promising to return in three days, within which time no attack was to be feared, set off to Wittenberg at once.

He put up at an inn under a feigned name, and at the approach of night, wrapped in his mantle, and provided with a brace of pistols which he had seized at the Tronkenburg, walked into Luther's apartment. Luther was sitting at his desk, occupied with his books and papers, and as soon as he saw the remarkable looking stranger open the door, and then bolt it behind him, he asked who he was and what he wanted. The man, reverentially holding his hat in his hand, had no sooner answered, with some misgiving as to the alarm he might occasion, that he was Michael Kohlhaas, the horse-dealer, than Luther cried out, "Away with thee," and added, as he rose from his desk to

ring the bell: "Thy breath is pestiferous, and thy approach is destruction!"

Kohlhaas, without stirring from the spot said: "Reverend sir, this pistol, if you touch the bell, lays me a corpse at your feet. Sit down and hear me. Among the angels, whose psalms you write, you are not safer than with me."

"But what dost thou want?" asked Luther, sitting down.

"To refute your opinion that I am an unjust man," replied Kohlhaas. "You have said in your placard that my sovereign knows nothing of my affairs. Well, give me a safe-conduct, and I will go to Dresden, and lay it before him."

"Godless and terrible man!" exclaimed Luther, both perplexed and alarmed by these words, "Who gave thee a right to attack Squire von Tronka, with no other authority than thine own decree, and then, when thou didst not find him in his castle, to visit with fire and sword every community that protected him?"

"Now, reverend sir," answered Kohlhaas, "the intelligence I received from Dresden misled me! The war which I carry on with the community of mankind is unjust, if I have not been expelled from it, as you assure me!"

"Expelled from it?" cried Luther, staring at him, "What madness is this? Who expelled thee from the community of the state in which thou art living? When, since the existence of states, was there an instance of such an expulsion of any one, whoever he might be?"

"I call him expelled," answered Kohlhaas, clenching his fist, "to whom the protection of the laws is denied! This protection I require to carry on my peaceful trade; it is only for the sake of this protection that, with my property, I take refuge with this community, and he who

denies it me drives me back to the beasts of the desert, and puts in my own hand, as you cannot deny, the club which is to defend me."

"But who has denied thee the protection of the laws?" cried Luther, "Did not I myself write that the complaint which was sent by thee to the elector, is still unknown to him? If his servants suppress suits behind his back, or abuse his sacred name, without his knowledge, who but God shall call him to account for the choice of such servants, and as for thee, abominable man, who has entitled thee to judge of him?"

"Well," answered Kohlhaas, "then if the elector does not expel me, I will return back again to the community which is under his protection. Give me, as I said before, a safe conduct to Dresden, and I will disperse the band I have assembled at the Castle of Lützen, and will once more bring the suit, with which I failed, before the tribunal of the country."

Luther, with a dissatisfied countenance, turned over the papers which lay upon his table and was silent. The bold position which this man took in the state offended him, and thinking over the decree which had been sent to the squire from Kohlhaasenbrück, he asked "what he wanted from the tribunal at Dresden?"

"The punishment of the squire, according to law," answered Kohlhaas, "the restoration of my horses to their former condition, and compensation for the injury which has been suffered both by me and my man Herse, who fell at Mühlberg, through the violence inflicted upon us."

"Compensation for injury!" cried Luther, "Why thou hast raised sums by thousands from Jews and Christians, in bonds and pledges, for the satisfaction of thy wild revenge. Wilt thou fix an amount if there should be a question about it?"

"God forbid," said Kohlhaas, "I do not ask back again my house and farm, or the wealth that I possessed--no more than the expenses of burying my wife! Herse's old mother will bring in an account of medical expenses, and a specification of what her son lost at Tronkenburg, while for the damage which I sustained by not selling my horses, the government can settle that by a competent arbitrator."

"Terrible and incomprehensible man," said Luther, gazing at him. "When thy sword hath inflicted on the squire the most frightful vengeance that can be conceived, what can induce thee to press for a sentence against him, the sharpness of which, if it should take effect, would inflict a wound of such slight importance?"

Kohlhaas answered, while a tear rolled down his cheek: "Revered sir, the affair has cost me my wife. Kohlhaas would show the world that she fell in the performance of no injustice. Concede to my will on these points, and let the tribunal speak. In every other matter that may come under discussion, I yield."

"Look," said Luther, "what thou askest, supposing circumstances to be such as the general voice reports, is just; and if thou hadst endeavoured, without revenging thyself on thine own account, to lay thine affair before the elector for his decision, I have no doubt that thy request would have been granted, in every point. But all things considered, wouldst thou not have done better, if, for thy Redeemer's sake, thou hadst forgiven the squire, taken the horses, lean and worn-out as they were, mounted them, and ridden home upon them to fatten them in their own stable at Kohlhaasenbrück."

"I might or I might not," answered Kohlhaas, going to the window, "Had I known that I should have to set them up with my own wife's heart's blood, then, reverend sir, I might have done as you say, and not have grudged a bushel of oats. But now they have cost me so dear, the matter, as I think, had better take its course. So let the sentence be passed as is my right, and let the squire feed my horses."

Luther, in the midst of contending thoughts, again returned to his papers, and said that he would himself communicate with the elector on the affair. In the meanwhile he told Kohlhaas to keep himself quiet at the Castle of Lützen, adding, that if the elector consented to a safe-conduct it should be made known to him by means of placards. "Whether," he added, as Kohlhaas stooped to kiss his hand, "the elector will show mercy instead of justice, I know not, for I understand he has collected an army, and is on the point of seizing thee at the Castle of Lützen. Nevertheless, as I told thee before, there shall be no want of trouble on my part." Upon this he arose and seemed about to dismiss him. Kohlhaas thought that this intercession was perfectly satisfactory, and Luther was signifying a farewell with his hand, when the former suddenly dropped on his knee before him, and said he had one request deep at heart. At Whitsuntide--a period when he was usually accustomed to take the sacrament--he had not gone to church, on account of his martial expedition, and he begged that Luther would have the kindness to receive his confession without further preparation, and to administer to him the supper of the Lord.

Luther, eyeing him keenly, said after a short reflection: "Yes, Kohlhaas, I will do it. But recollect that the Lord, whose body thou desirest, forgave his enemy. Wilt thou," he added, as Kohlhaas looked confused, "likewise forgive the squire who offended thee, go to the Tronkenburg, set thyself upon thy horses, and ride home to fatten them at Kohlhaasenbrück?"

"Reverend sir," said Kohlhaas, cooling as he grasped his hand, "Even the Lord did not forgive all his enemies. Let me forgive their highnesses, the two electors, the castellan and the bailiff, the rest of the Von Tronkas, and whoever besides may have injured me in this matter, but let me compel the squire to feed my horses."

Luther, on hearing these words, turned his back upon him with a displeased countenance, and rung the bell. Kohlhaas, as a servant with

a light announced himself in the antechamber, rose astounded, and drying his eyes, from the ground, and Luther having again set himself down to his papers, he opened the door to the man who was in vain struggling against, on account of the bolt being drawn. "Show a light," said Luther to the servant, casting a rapid side-glance at the stranger, whereupon the man rather astonished at the visit took down the house key from the wall, and retired to the door, which stood half open, waiting for Kohlhaas to withdraw. "Then," said Kohlhaas, deeply moved, as he took his hat in both hands, "I cannot receive the benefit of a reconciliation as I entreated."

"With thy Redeemer, no!" answered Luther shortly, "With thy sovereign--that, as I told thee, depends upon the success of an endeavour." He then motioned the servant to do as he had been ordered, without further delay. Kohlhaas, with an expression of deep pain, laid both his hands on his heart, followed the man, who lit him down stairs, and disappeared.

On the following morning Luther sent a communication to the Elector of Saxony, in which after giving a severe side-blow to Herr Henry, and Conrad von Tronka, the cup-bearer and chamberlain, who had, as was notorious, suppressed the complaint, he told him, with that freedom which was peculiar to him, that under such vexatious circumstances nothing was left but to accept the horse-dealer's proposal, and to grant an amnesty on account of the past, that he might renew his suit. Public opinion, he remarked, was completely on the side of this man, and that to a dangerous degree; nay, to such an extent, that even the city of Wittenberg, which he had burned three times, raised a voice in his favour. If his offer were refused it would unquestionably be brought, accompanied by very obnoxious remarks, to the notice of the people, who might easily be so far led away that the state authority could do nothing whatever with the transgressor. He concluded with the observation, that in this case the difficulty of treating with a citizen who had taken up arms must be passed over; that by the conduct towards him the man had been in a certain manner

released from his obligation to the state; and that in short, to settle the matter, it would be better to consider him as a foreign person who had invaded the country--which would be in some measure correct, as he was indeed a foreigner[5]--than as a rebel who had taken up arms against the throne.

The elector received this letter just when Prince Christian of Misnia, generalissimo of the empire, and uncle of the Prince Frederic who was defeated at Mühlberg, and still very ill of his wounds, the high chancellor of the tribunal, Count Wrede, Count Kallheim, president of the state-chancery, and the two von Tronkas, the cup-bearer, and the chamberlain, who had both been friends of the elector from his youth, were present in the castle. The chamberlain, who, as a privy counsellor of the elector, conducted private correspondence, with the privilege of using his name and coat of arms, first opened the subject, and after explaining at great length, that on his own authority he would never have set aside the petition which the horse-dealer had presented to the tribunal against his cousin the squire, if he had not been induced by false representations to consider it a mere vexatious and useless affair,--he came to the present state of things. He observed that neither according to divine nor human laws had the horse-dealer any right to take such a monstrous revenge, as he had allowed himself on account of this oversight. He dwelled on the lustre which would fall on the impious head of Kohlhaas, if he were treated as a party lawfully at war, and the dishonour which would result to the sacred person of the elector by such a proceeding appeared to him so great, that he said, with all the fire of eloquence, that he would rather see the decree of the round-headed rebel acted on, and the squire, his cousin, carried off to feed the horses at Kohlhaasenbrück, than he would see the proposition of Dr. Martin Luther accepted. The high chancellor of the tribunal, half turning to the chamberlain, expressed his regret that such a tender anxiety, as he now showed to clear up this affair to the honour of his sovereign, had not inspired him in the first instance. He pointed out to the elector his objection against the employment of force to carry out a measure which was manifestly unjust; he alluded

to the constant increase of the horse-dealer's followers as a most important circumstance, observing that the thread of misdeeds seemed to be spinning itself out to an infinite length, and declared that only an act of absolute justice, which should immediately and without reserve make good the false step that had been taken, could rescue the elector and the government from this hateful affair.

Prince Christian of Misnia, in answer to the elector's question, "what he thought of it," answered, turning respectfully to the high chancellor, that the sentiments which he had just heard filled him with great respect, but that the chancellor did not consider that while he was for helping Kohlhaas to his rights, he was compromising Wittenberg, Leipzig, and the whole of the country, which he had laid waste, in their just claims to restitution or at least to the punishment of the offender. The order of the state had been so completely distorted in the case of this man, that a maxim, taken from the science of law, could scarcely set it right again. Hence he agreed with the opinion of the chamberlain that the measures appointed for such cases should be adopted, that an armed force of sufficient magnitude should be raised, and that the horse-dealer, who had settled himself in the Castle of Lützen, should be arrested, or, at any rate, that his power should be crushed.

The chamberlain, politely taking from the wall two chairs for the elector and the prince, said he rejoiced that a man of such known integrity and acuteness agreed with him in the means to be employed in arranging this difficult affair. The prince, holding the chair without sitting down, and looking hard at him, observed, that he had no reason to rejoice, since a measure necessarily connected with the one he had recommended, would be to order his arrest, and proceed against him for the misuse of the elector's name. For if necessity required that the veil should be let down before the throne of justice, over a series of iniquities, which kept on indefinitely increasing, and therefore could no more find space to appear at the bar, that was not the case with the first misdeed that was the origin of all. A capital prosecution of the

chamberlain would alone authorise the state to crush the horse-dealer, whose cause was notoriously just, and into whose hand had been thrust the sword which he carried.

The elector, whom von Tronka eyed with some confusion as he heard these words, turned round deeply colouring, and approached the window. Count Kallheim, after an awkward pause on all sides, said that in this way they could not get out of the magic circle which encompassed them. With equal right might proceedings be commenced against the prince's nephew, Prince Frederic, since even he, in the singular expedition which he undertook against Kohlhaas had, in many instances, exceeded his instructions; and, therefore, were the inquiry once set on foot about the numerous persons who had occasioned the present difficulty, he must be included in the list, and called to account by the elector for what had taken place at Mühlberg.

The cup-bearer, von Tronka, while the elector with doubtful glances approached his table, then took up the subject, and said, that he could not conceive how the right method of proceeding had escaped men of such wisdom, as those assembled unquestionably were. The horse-dealer, as far as he understood, had promised to dismiss his force if he obtained a free conduct to Dresden, and a renewed investigation of his cause. From this, however, it did not follow, that he was to have an amnesty for his monstrous acts of vengeance; two distinct points which Dr. Luther and the council seemed to have confused. "If," he continued, laying his finger to the side of his nose, "the judgment on account of the horses--no matter which way it goes--is pronounced by the Dresden tribunal, there is nothing to prevent us from arresting Kohlhaas on the ground of his robberies and incendiarism. This would be a prudent stroke of policy, which would unite the views of the statesmen on both sides, and secure the applause of the world and of posterity."

The elector, when the prince and the high chancellor answered this discourse of the cup-bearer merely with an angry glance, and the

discussion seemed to be at an end, said that he would by himself reflect on the different opinions he had heard till the next sitting of the council. His heart being very susceptible to friendship, the preliminary measure proposed by the prince had extinguished in him the desire of commencing the expedition against Kohlhaas, for which every preparation had been made. At all events he kept with him the high chancellor, Count Wrede, whose opinion appeared the most feasible; and when this nobleman showed him letters, from which it appeared that the horse-dealer had already acquired a force of four hundred men, and was likely, in a short time, to double and treble it, amid the general discontent which prevailed in the land on account of the chamberlain's irregularities, he resolved without delay to adopt Dr. Luther's advice; he, therefore, entrusted to Count Wrede the whole management of the Kohlhaas affair, and in a few days appeared a placard, the substance of which was as follows:

"We, &c., &c., Elector of Saxony, having especial regard to the intercession of Dr. Martin Luther, do give notice to Michael Kohlhaas, horse-dealer of Brandenburg, that, on condition of his laying down arms, within three days after sight hereof, he shall have free conduct to Dresden, to the end that his cause be tried anew. And if, as is not to be expected, his suit, concerning the horses, shall be rejected by the tribunal at Dresden, then shall he be prosecuted with all the severity of the law for attempting to obtain justice by his own might; but, in the contrary case, mercy instead of justice shall be granted, and a full amnesty shall be given to Kohlhaas and all his troop."

No sooner had Kohlhaas received a copy of this notice, which was posted up all over the country, through the hands of Dr. Luther, than, notwithstanding the conditional manner in which it was worded, he dismissed his whole band with gifts, thanks, and suitable advice. All that he gained by plunder--money, arms, and implements--he gave up to the courts of Lützen, as the elector's property, and after he had sent Waldmann to Kohlhaasenbrück, with letters to the farmer, that he

might, if possible, re-purchase his farm, and Sternbald to Schwerin to fetch his children, whom he again wished to have with him, he left the Castle of Lützen, and went to Dresden, unknown, with the rest of his little property, which he held in paper.

It was daybreak, and the whole city was still sleeping, when he knocked at the door of his small tenement in the Pirna suburb, which had been left him through the honesty of the farmer, and told his old servant, Thomas, who had the care of the property, and who opened the door with amazement, that he might go and tell the Prince of Misnia, at the seat of government, that he, Kohlhaas, the horse-dealer, was there. The Prince of Misnia, who, on hearing this announcement, thought it right immediately to inform himself of the relation in which this man stood, found, as he went out with a train of knights and soldiers, that the streets leading to the residence of Kohlhaas were already thronged with an innumerable multitude. The intelligence that the destroying angel was there, who pursued the oppressors of the people with fire and sword, had set all Dresden, city and suburbs, in motion. It was found necessary to bolt the door against the pressure of the anxious multitude, and the youngsters clambered up to the window to see the incendiary, who was at breakfast. As soon as the prince, with the assistance of the guard, who forced a passage for him, had pressed forward into the house, and had entered Kohlhaas's room, he asked him, as he stood half-undressed at a table, "Whether he was Kohlhaas, the horse-dealer?" Whereupon Kohlhaas, taking out of his girdle a pocket-book, with several papers relating to his position, and handing them over, respectfully said, "Yes!" adding that, after dismissing his band, in conformity with the privilege which the elector had granted, he had come to Dresden to bring his suit against Squire Wenzel von Tronka, on account of his black horses. The prince, after a hasty glance, in which he surveyed him from head to foot, and ran over the papers which he found in the pocket-book, heard his explanation of the meaning of a document given by the court at Lützen, and relating to the deposit in favour of the electoral treasury. Then, having examined him by all sorts of questions about

his children, his property, and the sort of life he intended to lead in future, and having thus ascertained that there was no occasion to feel uneasiness on his account, he returned to him his pocket-book and said that there was nothing to impede his suit, and that he might himself apply to Count Wrede, the high chancellor of the tribunal, and commence it immediately. The prince then, after a pause, during which he went to the window and saw, with wonder, the immense multitude before the house, said: "You will be obliged to have a guard for the first days to watch over you here and when you go out!" Kohlhaas cast down his eyes surprised and was silent. "Well, no matter!" said the prince, leaving the window, "whatever happens you will only have yourself to blame." He then moved towards the door with the design of quitting the house. Kohlhaas, who had recovered, said, "Do as you please, gracious prince! Only pledge me your word to remove the guard as soon as I desire it and I have no objection to make against this measure." "That is not worth speaking of," said the prince, who after telling the three soldiers, who were appointed as guards, that the man in whose house they were placed was free, and that when he went out they were merely to follow him for his protection, took leave of the horse-dealer with a condescending wave of the hand and departed.

About noon, Kohlhaas, attended by his three guards, and followed by a countless multitude, who, warned by the police, did him no manner of injury, proceeded to the chancellor's. Count Wrede received him, in his anteroom, with kindness and affability, discoursed with him for two entire hours, and after he had heard the whole course of events from the beginning to the end of the affair, he directed him to a celebrated advocate in the city, who was attached to the court, that he might favourably draw up his complaint. Kohlhaas without further delay went to the advocate's house, and after the complaint was drawn up, which, like the first rejected one, required the punishment of the squire according to law, the restoration of the horses to their former condition, and a compensation both for the damage he had sustained, and for what his servant, Herse, who had fallen at Mühlberg, had

suffered (for the benefit of his mother), he again returned home, still followed by the gaping multitude, resolving not to go out of doors any more unless urgent necessity demanded it.

In the meanwhile Squire Wenzel von Tronka was released from his confinement in Wittenberg, and after he had recovered from a dangerous erysipelas in the foot, was peremptorily summoned by the tribunal to appear at Dresden, and answer the complaint of the horse-dealer, Kohlhaas, respecting certain horses, which had been unlawfully detained and spoiled. His relations, the brothers von Tronka, (the chamberlain and the cupbearer,) at whose house he put up, received him with the greatest indignation and contempt; they called him a wretched and worthless person, who brought disgrace on all his family, told him that he would infallibly lose the cause, and bade him prepare to bring the horses, which he would be condemned to feed, amid the general derision of the world. The squire, with a weak trembling voice, said that he was more to be pitied than any one in the world. He swore that he knew but little of the whole cursed business, which had plunged him into calamity, and that the castellan and the bailiff were alone to blame, inasmuch as they had employed the horses in the harvest without the remotest knowledge and wish on his part, and had ruined them by immoderate work in their corn fields. He sat down as he uttered these words, and entreated his relations not to plunge him back again into the illness from which he had recovered, by their reproaches. On the following day, the brothers von Tronka, who possessed property in the neighbourhood of the destroyed Tronkenburg, finding there was nothing else to be done, wrote to their farmers and bailiffs, at their kinsman's request, to obtain information respecting the horses, which had disappeared on the day of the calamity and had not been heard of since. But the whole place having been laid waste, and nearly all the inhabitants having been slaughtered, they could learn no more than that a servant, driven by blows with the flat of the incendiary's sabre, had saved the horses from the burning shed, in which they stood, and that on asking where he was to take them, and what he was to do, he only received from the

ruffian a kick for an answer. The gouty old housekeeper, who had fled to Misnia, stated, in writing, that the servant on the morning that followed that dreadful night had gone with the horses to the Brandenburg border.

Nevertheless all inquiries made in that direction proved fruitless, and, indeed, the intelligence did not appear correct, as the squire had no servant whose house was in Brandenburg or even on the road thither. Men from Dresden, who had been at Wilsdruf a few days after the conflagration of the Tronkenburg, said that about the time specified a boy had come there leading two horses by a halter, and that he had left the animals, as they were in a very wretched plight and unable to proceed further, in the cow-shed of a shepherd, who had wished to restore them to good condition. For many reasons it seemed probable enough that these were the horses in question, but the shepherd of Wilsdruf had, according to the account of people who came thence, already sold them to somebody--it was not known to whom; while a third rumour, the originator of which could not be discovered, was to the effect that the horses were dead and had been buried in the pit at Wilsdruf. The brothers von Tronka, who, as might be supposed, considered this turn of affairs the most desirable, seeing they would be relieved by it from the necessity of feeding the horses in their own stable--which they must otherwise have done, as their cousin, the squire, had no stables of his own--nevertheless wished to be thoroughly assured that the circumstances were correctly stated. Accordingly Herr Wenzel von Tronka, in his capacity of feudal lord, wrote to the courts of Wilsdruf, describing very fully the horses which, he said, had been lent to him, and had since, unfortunately, been taken away, and requesting them to try to discover where those animals were stationed, and to desire the present owner, whoever he might be, to deliver them up at the stables of the Chamberlain von Tronka, on an indemnification for all expenses.

In a few days the man, to whom the shepherd of Wilsdruf had sold the horses made his appearance and brought them, lean and tottering, tied

to his cart, to the market-place of the city. Unfortunately for Squire Wenzel, and still more so for honest Kohlhaas, this man was the knacker from Döbbeln.

As soon as Wenzel, in the presence of his cousin, the chamberlain, heard an indistinct rumour that a man with two black horses, saved from the flames at the Tronkenburg, had come into the city, they both set off attended by some servants, whom they had hastily gathered together to the castle-yard, where he was, that in case the horses should turn out to be Kohlhaas's they might pay the expenses and take them home. But how surprised were they when they saw a multitude, which increased every moment, attracted by the spectacle, and assembled about the cart to which the horses were fastened. The people were shouting amid peals of laughter, that the horses which had caused the state to totter had come to the knackers. The squire, who had walked round the cart, and saw with confusion the miserable beasts, who looked every moment as if they longed to die, said that these were not the horses which he had taken from Kohlhaas, when the chamberlain casting upon him a look of speechless rage, which, had he been made of iron, would have crushed him, stepped up to the knacker and asked him, as he flung back his mantle and discovered his chain and order, whether these were the horses which had been in the possession of the shepherd of Wilsdruf, and which Squire Wenzel von Tronka, to whom they belonged, had required. The man, who with a pail in his hand, was watering a stout-bodied horse, that drew his cart, said: "Do you mean the black ones?" Taking the bit out of his horse's mouth, and setting down the pail he said that the animals tied to the cart had been sold to him by a swineherd of Hainichen, but where he got them, and whether they came from the Wilsdruf shepherd--that he knew nothing about. The messenger of the Wilsdruf court, he said, as he again took up the pail and rested it against the pole of the cart, had told him that he was to bring them to Dresden to the house of the von Tronkas, but the squire to whom he had been directed was called Conrad. After these words he turned round with

the remainder of the water, which the horse had left in the pail, and flung it upon the pavement.

The chamberlain, who amid the gaze of the scoffing multitude could not get a look from the fellow, who continued his work with the most insensible zeal, told him that he was the Squire Conrad von Tronka, but that the horses he had with him belonged to the squire his cousin, that they had come to the Wilsdruf shepherd through a servant who had run away, taking advantage of the fire at the Tronkenburg, and that they originally belonged to the horse-dealer Kohlhaas. He asked the fellow, who stood with outstretched legs and hitched up his breeches, whether he really knew nothing about the matter;--whether the swineherd of Hainichen had not purchased them from the Wilsdruf shepherd (on which circumstance all depended), or from some third party, who might have obtained them from that source.

The man rudely said that he understood not a word that was said, and that whether Peter or Paul or the Wilsdruf shepherd had the horses before the swineherd of Hainichen--it was just the same to him--provided they were not stolen. Upon this he went, with his whip across his broad back, to a neighbouring pot-house to get his breakfast.

The chamberlain, who did not know what in the world he should do with the horses, which the swineherd of Hainichen had, as it seemed, sold to the knacker of Döbbeln, unless indeed they were the horses on which the devil rode through Saxony, asked the squire to put in a word, and when his kinsman, with pale trembling lips, answered that the most advisable plan would be to buy them, whether they belonged to Kohlhaas or not, he wrapped his mantle round him, and not knowing what to do, retired from the crowd, cursing the father and mother who had given him birth. He then called to him Baron von Wenk, one of his acquaintance, who was riding along the street, and resolving not to leave the spot, because the rabble looked at him scoffingly, and with their handkerchiefs before their mouths only

seemed to wait for his departure to burst out, he bade him call on Count von Wrede and by his means make Kohlhaas come to inspect the horses.

Now it happened that Kohlhaas, who had been summoned by an officer of the court to give certain explanations as to the surrender of property at Lützen, was present in the chancellor's room when the baron entered, and while the chancellor with a fretful countenance rose from his chair and motioned the horse-dealer aside, the baron, to whom the person of Kohlhaas was unknown, represented the difficulty in which the von Tronkas were placed. The knacker had come from Döbbeln in accordance with a defective requisition of the Wilsdruf courts, with horses certainly; but their condition was so hopeless that Squire Wenzel could not help feeling a doubt as to their belonging to Kohlhaas. Hence, if they were to be taken from the knacker, in order that their recovery might be attempted, an ocular inspection by Kohlhaas would be necessary in the first instance to clear up the doubt that existed. "Have then the goodness," he concluded, "to fetch the horse-dealer out of his house with a guard, and let him be taken to the market-place where the horses now are."

The chancellor, taking his spectacles from his nose, said that he found himself in a dilemma, since, on the one hand, he did not think the affair could be settled otherwise than by the ocular inspection of Kohlhaas; and, on the other hand, he did not conceive that he, as chancellor, had any right to send Kohlhaas about guarded, wherever the squire's fancy might dictate. He therefore introduced to the baron the horse-dealer, who was standing, behind him; and while he sat down and again put on his spectacles, told him to apply to the man himself. Kohlhaas, who allowed no gesture to show what was passing in his mind, declared that he was quite ready to follow the baron to the market, and inspect the horses, which the knacker had brought to the city. He then, while the baron turned round, confused, again approached the chancellor's table, and took leave of him, having given him from his pocket-book several papers relative to the surrender at

Lützen. The baron, who, with a face red as fire, had retired to the window, likewise took leave of the chancellor, and the two, accompanied by the guards appointed by the Prince of Misnia, proceeded to the palace-yard, accompanied by a multitude of people. Herr Conrad, the chamberlain, who, in spite of the solicitation of several friends on the spot, had maintained his ground among the people against the knacker of Döbbeln, no sooner saw the baron and the horse-dealer, than he approached the latter, and, holding his sword proudly under his arm, asked him if the horses which stood behind the cart were his. The horse-dealer, after modestly turning to the gentleman who questioned him, and whom he did not know, and touching his hat, went up to the knacker's cart, followed by the train of knights. At about twelve paces distance he glanced hastily at the animals, who stood on tottering legs, with their heads bent to the ground, and did not eat the hay which the knacker put before them, and then returning to the chamberlain, exclaimed: "Gracious sir, the man is quite right; the horses which are bound to the cart belong to me." Then looking at the circle around him, he touched his hat once more, and, attended by his guard, again left the spot. The chamberlain had no sooner heard what Kohlhaas said, than he approached the knacker with a hurried step, that made the plume on his helmet shake, flung him a purse full of gold; and while the man, with the purse in his hand, was staring at his money, and was combing back his hair with a leaden comb, he ordered his servant to detach the horses and lead them home. This servant, who, at his master's call, had left a circle of friends and relatives in the crowd, went up to the horses over a large puddle, with a face somewhat crimson. Scarcely, however, had {202} he touched the halter, than his cousin, Master Himboldt, with the words, "You shall not touch that carrion," seized his arm and flung him from the cart. He added, picking his way over the puddle to the chamberlain, who stood dumb with astonishment, that he must get a knacker's boy to perform such an office for him. The chamberlain, who, foaming with rage, gazed for a moment at Himboldt, turned round, and called after the guard over the heads of the knights who were about him. As soon as, by the order of Baron von Wenk, an

officer with some electoral troopers had made his appearance from the castle, he desired him, after briefly setting forth the shameful acts of rebellion which the burghers of the city ventured on, instantly to take the ringleader, Master Himboldt, into custody. Then seizing Himboldt by the collar, he accused him of flinging away from the cart the servant who, by his orders, was unbinding the horses, and otherwise ill-using him. Master Himboldt, throwing off the chamberlain with a dexterous twist, said: "Gracious sir, telling a fellow of twenty what he ought to do, is not inciting him to rebellion. Ask him whether, against all usage and propriety, he will meddle with those horses that are tied up to the cart. If he will, after what I have told him--why, be it so! For all that I care, he may flay them on the spot if he pleases." Upon this the chamberlain turned round to the servant, and asked him whether he had any objection to fulfil his commands; namely, to untie Kohlhaas's horses, and take them home. The lad, timidly slinking among the burghers, answered that the horses must be made decent before he could do any thing of the sort; whereupon the chamberlain darted after him, tore off his hat, which bore the badge of his house, trampled it under foot, drew his sword, and hunting the fellow about with furious strokes of the blade, made him at once quit the spot and his service together. "Strike the ruffian to the ground!" shouted Master Himboldt, and while the burghers indignant at the spectacle, combined together and forced away the guard, he knocked down the chamberlain from behind, tore off his mantle, collar, and helmet, twisted the sword out of his hand, and furiously flung it to a distance. In vain did Squire Wenzel, saving himself from the tumult, call on the knights to assist his cousin; before they could advance a step they were dispersed by the pressure of the people, so that the chamberlain, who had hurt his head by the fall, was exposed to all the fury of the mob. Nothing could have saved him but the appearance of a troop of soldiers who happened to be riding by, and whom the officer of the electoral troopers called to his assistance. This officer, after repelling the multitude, seized the enraged Himboldt, who was conducted to prison by some knights, while two friends picked up from the ground the unfortunate chamberlain all covered with blood, and took him

home. Such was the unlucky termination of the really well-meant and honest attempt to repair the wrong which had been done to the horse-dealer. The knacker of Döbbeln, whose business was over, and who did not want to stop any longer, tied the horses to a lamp-post as soon as the people began to disperse, and there they stood all day, without any one to care about them--a jest for the loiterers in the street. Indeed, for the want of all other attendance, the police was obliged to take them in hand, and towards night called upon the knacker of Dresden to keep them in the yard before the town till further directions.

This occurrence, though the horse-dealer had really nothing to do with it, awakened among the better and more temperate sort of people, a feeling which was highly unfavourable to his cause. The relation in which he stood to the state was considered quite unsufferable, and both in private houses and in public places, the opinion was expressed, that it would be better to do him a manifest injustice, and again annul the whole affair, than show him justice in such a small matter merely to gratify his mad obstinacy, especially as such justice would only be the reward of his deeds of violence. Even the chancellor himself, to complete the destruction of poor Kohlhaas, with his over-strained notions of justice, and his obvious hatred of the Von Tronka family, contributed to the propagation and confirmation of this view. It was highly improbable that the horses, which were now in the custody of the knacker of Dresden, could be restored to that condition in which they left the stable at Kohlhaasenbrück, but even suppose art and constant attention could effect as much, the disgrace which under the circumstances fell upon the squire's family was so great, that considering its political importance as one of the first and noblest families in the land, nothing appeared more suitable than to propose a compensation for the horses in money. The chancellor having some days afterwards received a letter from the president Kallheim, who made this proposition in the name of the disabled chamberlain, wrote to Kohlhaas, advising him not to refuse such an offer in case it should be made to him. Nevertheless he returned a short and not very civil

answer to the president, in which he requested him to spare him all private commissions of the kind, advising the chamberlain to apply to the horse-dealer himself, whom he described a very honest and modest man. Kohlhaas's resolution was already weakened by the occurrence in the market-place, and following the advice of the chancellor, he only waited for overtures on the part of the squire or his connections readily to meet them with a full pardon for all that had past. But the knights' pride was too sensitive to allow them to make such overtures, and highly indignant at the answer they had received from the chancellor, they showed the letter to the elector, who on the following morning visited the chamberlain as he still lay ill of his wounds in his room. With a weak and plaintive voice, the invalid asked him whether, when he had already risked his life to settle this matter according to his wishes, he should now expose his honour to the censure of the world, and appear with a request for indulgence before a man, who had brought all imaginable shame upon him and his family. The elector having read through the letter, asked Count Kallheim, with some confusion, whether the tribunal would not be justified in taking its ground with Kohlhaas on the circumstance that the horses could not be restored, and then in decreeing a mere compensation in money as if they were dead. The count replied, "Gracious sir, they are dead!--dead in the legal sense of the word, because they have no value, and they will be physically dead before they can be removed from the flayer's yard to the knight's stables."

Upon this the elector putting up the letter, said that he would speak about it to the chancellor, consoled the chamberlain, who arose in his bed and thankfully seized his hand, and after he had told him to take every care of his health, rose very graciously from his chair, and took his leave.

Thus stood matters in Dresden, while another storm still more formidable was gathering over poor Kohlhaas from Lützen, and the spiteful knights had tact enough to draw down its flashes upon his unlucky head. John Nagelschmidt, one of the men collected by

Kohlhaas, and dismissed after the appearance of the amnesty, had thought fit a few weeks afterwards to assemble anew a portion of the rabble who were disposed for any outrage, and to carry on the trade into which Kohlhaas had initiated him on his own account. This worthless fellow, partly to frighten the officers by whom he was pursued, partly to induce the peasantry after the ordinary fashion to take part in his misdeeds, called himself vicegerent to Kohlhaas, and spread a report with the cunning he had learned from his master, that the amnesty had not been kept with many men, who had returned quietly to their homes--nay that Kohlhaas himself, by a shameful violation of faith, had been imprisoned immediately on his arrival at Dresden, and had been consigned to the care of a guard. In placards, quite similar to those of Kohlhaas, he made his band of incendiaries appear as a warlike force, raised solely for the honour of God, with the mission of seeing that the amnesty granted by the elector was properly carried out. The whole affair, as we have already said, had nothing to do with the honour of God, nor with any attachment to Kohlhaas, about whose fate the fellow was totally indifferent, but he merely intended under the protection of devices to burn and plunder with greater impunity. The knights, as soon as the news of this occurrence reached Dresden, could scarcely conceal their joy at the entirely new turn which it gave to the whole affair. With sagacious and dissatisfied side-glances they alluded to the mistake that had been made in granting Kohlhaas the amnesty in spite of all their warnings, just as if for the sake of encouraging rascals of every kind to follow in his steps. Not contented with giving credence to Nagelschmidt's pretext, that he had taken up arms solely for the support and defence of his oppressed master, they plainly expressed their opinion that the whole enterprise was devised by Kohlhaas to intimidate the government, and thus to hurry on the decree and render it completely conformable to his obstinate will. Nay, the cupbearer went so far as to say to a party of hunting squires and courtiers, who, after their meal, had assembled in the elector's anteroom, that the disbanding of the gang of robbers at Lützen was a mere feint; and while he laughed much at the chancellor's love of justice, he showed from many

circumstances clearly combined, that the troop existed now just as much as before, in the woods of the electorate, and merely waited for a signal from the horse-dealer to break out anew with fire and sword. Prince Christian of Misnia, very much displeased at this new turn of affairs, which threatened seriously to sully the fame of his sovereign, immediately went to the castle to see him, and clearly perceiving that it was the interest of the knights to crush Kohlhaas if possible on the ground of new misdeeds, he asked leave to examine him at once. The horse-dealer somewhat surprised, was conducted to the seat of government (Gubernium) by an officer, with his two little boys, Henry and Leopold in his arms, for his man Sternbald had returned the day before with his five children from Mecklenburg, where they had been staying, and thoughts of various kinds, which it would be tedious to unravel, determined him to take with him to the examination the two boys, who, in tears begged to accompany him, as they saw him depart. The prince, after looking kindly at the children, whom Kohlhaas had seated beside him, and asking their names and ages in a friendly manner, disclosed to him the liberties which Nagelschmidt, his former servant, had allowed himself in the valleys of the Erzgebirg, and while he showed him what the fellow called his mandates, requested him to state what he could in his own justification.

Shocked as the horse-dealer was at the scandalous papers, he nevertheless had but little difficulty in the presence of such an upright man as the prince, in showing how groundless were the accusations that had been brought against him. Not only, as he said, was he, under the circumstances, far from requiring any assistance from a third party, to bring his suit to a decision, seeing that it was going on as well as possible, but some letters which he had with him, and which he produced to the prince, plainly showed the impossibility of Nagelschmidt being willing to give him the assistance in question, since shortly before he had disbanded his troop, he had been going to hang the fellow for acts of violence in the flat country. Indeed he had only been saved by the appearance of the electoral amnesty, which had broken off all the connection between them, and they had parted

the day after as mortal enemies. Kohlhaas, on his own proposal, which was accepted by the prince, sat down and wrote a letter to Nagelschmidt, in which he called the pretext of supporting the amnesty, granted to him and his troop, and afterwards broken, a shameful and wicked invention; and told him that on arriving at Dresden he was neither arrested nor consigned to a guard, that his suit was proceeding quite according to his wishes, and that he gave him up to the full vengeance of the laws as a warning to the rabble around him for the incendiarisms he had committed in the Erzgebirg, after the publication of the amnesty. At the same time some fragments of the criminal proceedings, which the horse-dealer had set on foot against the man at the Castle of Lützen, for the misdeeds above alluded to, were subjoined to enlighten the people, as to the good-for-nothing fellow, who had been sentenced to the gallows, and had only been saved by the elector's patent. The prince, satisfied by these acts, calmed Kohlhaas, as to the suspicion which they had been forced to express under the circumstances, assured him that so long as he continued in Dresden, the amnesty granted him should remain unbroken, once more shook hands with the boys, to whom he gave the fruit that was on the table, and dismissed him. The chancellor, who likewise perceived the danger that impended over the horse-dealer, did his utmost to bring the affair to a conclusion before it became entangled and complicated by new events. Strange to say, the cunning knights desired and aimed at the same thing, and instead of tacitly confessing the crime as before, and limiting the opposition to a mitigation of the sentence, they now began with all sorts of chicanery to deny the crime itself. Now they gave out that the horses had merely been kept at the Tronkenburg by the act of the castellan and the bailiff, of which the squire knew little or nothing; now they asserted that the beasts were sick of a violent and dangerous cough immediately after their arrival, appealing to witnesses whom they promised to produce; and when they were beaten out of the field with their arguments by inquiries and explanations, they brought an electoral edict, in which twelve years before, on account of prevailing distemper among cattle, the introduction of horses from Brandenburg

into Saxony was prohibited. This was to prove that the squire was not only authorised but actually bound to detain the horses brought by Kohlhaas over the border. Kohlhaas, who in the meanwhile had repurchased his farm of the good farmer at Kohlhaasenbrück for a small sum, wished, as it appears, for the purpose of finally completing this transaction, to leave Dresden for a few days, and to travel home;-- a resolution in which, however, we doubt not the alleged business, important as it might be on account of the winter sowing time, had less part than the wish to examine his situation under circumstances so remarkable and so critical. Reasons of another kind, which we leave to the surmise of every one who knows the secrets of his own heart, might also have operated. He therefore went to the high-chancellor, without the guard, and having the farmer's letters in his hand, stated that if his presence at the court could be dispensed with, as indeed seemed to be the case, he wished to leave the city and go to Brandenburg for eight days or a fortnight, promising to return within that time. The high-chancellor, looking on the ground with a dubious and displeased countenance, said that his presence was now more necessary than ever, since the court, in consequence of the crafty and quibbling objections of the opposite party, would require his explanation in a thousand cases, which had not been foreseen. However, when Kohlhaas referred him to his advocate, who was well acquainted with the merits of the case, and urgently though modestly still adhered to his request, promising to limit his absence to eight days, the high chancellor said, after a pause, as he dismissed him, that he hoped he would obtain passports of Prince Christian of Misnia. Kohlhaas, who perfectly understood the chancellor's countenance, sat down at once confirmed in his resolution, and asked the Prince of Misnia, as chief minister, without assigning any reason, to give him passports to Kohlhaasenbrück for eight days. To this request he received an official answer, signed by Baron Siegfried von Wenk, governor of the castle, stating that his petition for passports to Kohlhaasenbrück had been laid before the elector, and that as soon as consent was obtained, they would be forwarded to him. Kohlhaas asked his advocate how it was that this paper was signed by a Baron

Siegfried von Wenk, and not by Prince Christian of Misnia, whereupon he was informed that the prince had gone to his estates three days before, and that the affairs of office had been entrusted during his absence, to Baron Siegfried von Wenk, governor of the castle, and cousin to the gentleman who has been previously mentioned.

Kohlhaas, whose heart began to beat uneasily under all these circumstances, waited several days for an answer to his petition which had been brought before the elector with singular prolixity; but a week passed, and another and another, and he had neither got an answer nor had the tribunal come to a decision of his case, definitely as it had been announced. Therefore, on the twelfth day, fully determined to know the disposition of the government towards him, whatever it might be, he sent another pressing application to the ministry for the passport. But how surprised he was, when on the evening of the following day (which had likewise passed away without the expected answer), as he stepped towards the window of his back room, deeply occupied in pondering over his situation, and especially on the amnesty which Dr. Luther had obtained for him, he did not see the guards who had been given him by the Prince of Misnia in the little outhouse which had been assigned as their abode. The old servant Thomas whom he called, and of whom he asked what this meant, answered with a sigh, "Master, all is not as it should be! The soldiers, of whom there are more than usual to-day, dispersed themselves over the whole house as night advanced. Two are standing with spear and shield in the street before the front door, two in the garden at the back door, and two others are lying on a heap of straw in the anteroom, where they say they intend to sleep." Kohlhaas, who changed colour, turned round and said it was just the same to him whether they were there or not, and that as soon as he got to the passage he should set up a light that the soldiers might see.

Under the pretext of emptying a vessel he opened the front shutter and convinced himself that the old man had spoken the truth; for the guard

had just been quietly relieved, a measure which never had been thought of before. This ascertained he lay down in his bed, little inclined to sleep, and with his mind thoroughly made up as to what he should do the next day. Nothing on the part of the government was more displeasing to him than the empty show of justice, while, in fact, the amnesty was broken; and in case he was a prisoner, about which there seemed to be no doubt, he wished to compel the government to declare it clearly and without ambiguity. Therefore, at the dawn of the following day, he had his vehicle brought up, and the horses put to it by Sternbald his servant, to go, as he said, to the farmer at Lockewitz, who had spoken to him a few days before at Dresden as an old acquaintance, and had invited him to pay him a visit with his children. The soldiers, who were laying their heads together, and perceived the movements in the house, sent one of their number privily into the town, whereupon in a few minutes an officer of the government appeared, at the head of several men, and went into the opposite house, as if he had something to do there. Kohlhaas who, as he was occupied with dressing his boys, witnessed their movements, and designedly kept his vehicle before the house longer than was necessary, went out with his children, as soon as he saw that the police had completed their preparations, without taking any notice, and telling the soldiers at the door as he passed them, that they need not follow him, he took the boys into the cart, and kissed and consoled the little crying girls, who, in conformity with his orders, remained with the daughter of the old servant. He had scarcely mounted the cart himself, when the officer came up to him with his train from the opposite house, and asked him where he was going. Kohlhaas answering that he was going to see his friend the farmer at Lockewitz, who had some days before invited him into the country with his boys, the officer said that in that case he must wait a few moments, as some horse-soldiers, by the command of the Prince of Misnia, would have to accompany him.

Kohlhaas asked him, smiling from the cart, whether he thought his person would not be safe in the house of a friend, who had invited him

to his table for a day. The officer answered pleasantly and cheerfully enough, that the danger was certainly not great, and added that he would find the men by no means burdensome. Kohlhaas replied, seriously, that when he first came to Dresden, the Prince of Misnia had left it quite free to him whether he would avail himself of the guard or not, and when the officer expressed his surprise at this circumstance, and referred to the custom which had prevailed during the whole of Kohlhaas's residence at Dresden, the horse-dealer told him of the occurrence which had led to the appointment of a guard in his house. The officer assured him that the order of the Baron von Wenk, governor of the castle, who was at present head of the police, made the constant guard of his person an imperative duty, and begged him, if it was unpleasant to be so attended, to go to the seat of government himself, and rectify the error which seemed to prevail there. Kohlhaas, darting an expressive look at the officer, and determined either to bend or to break the matter, said that he would do this, descended with a beating heart from the cart, had his children carried into the passage by the servant, and repaired with the officer and his guard to the seat of government, leaving the man with the vehicle in front of the house. It chanced that Baron von Wenk was engaged in the examination of a band of Nagelschmidt's men, which had been captured in the neighbourhood of Leipzig, and had been brought in the evening before, and that these fellows were being questioned on many matters which would willingly have been heard by the knights who were with the baron when the horse-dealer and those who attended him entered the room. The baron no sooner saw him, than he went up to him, while the knights became suddenly silent, and ceased their examination, and asked him what he wanted.

The horse-dealer respectively stating his project of dining with the farmer in Lockewitz, and his wish to leave behind the soldiers, whom he did not require, the baron changed colour, and seeming as if he suppressed another speech, said that his best plan would be to stop quietly at home, and put off the dinner with the Lockewitz farmer. Then cutting short the conversation, and turning to the officer he told

him, that the command which he had given him with respect to Kohlhaas, was to remain as before, and that he was not to leave the city, except under the guard of six horsemen. Kohlhaas asked whether he was a prisoner, and whether he was to believe that the amnesty solemnly granted him in the eyes of the whole world was broken; whereupon the baron, suddenly becoming as red as fire, turned to him, and walking close up to him, looked full in his eyes, and answered, "Yes, yes, yes!" He then turned his back upon him, left him standing, and again went to Nagelschmidt's men.

Kohlhaas then quitted the room, and although he saw that the only course left for him, namely, flight, was rendered difficult by the steps which he had taken, he nevertheless concluded he had acted rightly, as he now saw he was free from all obligation to conform to the articles of the amnesty. When he reached home, he ordered the horses to be taken from the cart, and accompanied by the officer entered his chamber very much dispirited. This officer, in a manner which greatly disgusted him, assured him that all turned on a misunderstanding which would soon be cleared up, while his men, at a sign which he gave them, fastened up all the outlets that led into the yard. The front entrance, as the officer assured Kohlhaas, was open to his use as before.

In the meanwhile, Nagelschmidt was so hampered on all sides by soldiers and officers of the law in the woods of the Erzgebirge, that being utterly destitute of means to carry out the part he had chosen, he hit upon the thought of really drawing Kohlhaas into his interest. He had learned with tolerable accuracy, through a traveller who passed on the road, the state of the suit at Dresden, and was of opinion, that in spite of the open hostility which existed between them, it would be possible to induce the horse-dealer to enter into a new alliance with him. He therefore sent a man to him, with a scarcely legible letter, to the effect, that if he would come to the Altenburg territory, and resume the conduct of the band, who had assembled there, out of the relics of the one that had been dismissed, he would furnish him with

horses, men, and money, to assist him in flying from his prison at Dresden. At the same time, he promised to be better and more obedient in future than he had been; and to prove his fidelity and devotion, he offered to come to Dresden himself and effect Kohlhaas's liberation. Now the fellow to whom this letter was entrusted had the misfortune to fall into convulsions of a dangerous sort, such as he had been subject to from his youth, close to Dresden, and the consequence was, that the letter which he carried in his doublet, was discovered by people who came to assist him, and that he himself, as soon as he had recovered, was arrested, and removed to the seat of government, attended by a numerous guard. The Governor von Wenk had no sooner read the letter than he hastened to the elector, in whose castle he found the two von Tronkas (the chamberlain having recovered of his wounds) and Count Kallheim, president of the chancery. These gentlemen were of opinion, that Kohlhaas should be arrested without delay, and prosecuted on the ground of a secret understanding with Nagelschmidt, since, as they attempted to prove, such a letter could not have been written, had not others been previously sent by the horse-dealer, and had not some criminal compact been formed, for the perpetration of new atrocities. The elector firmly refused to violate the free conduct which he had granted to Kohlhaas, on the mere ground of this letter. Nay, according to his opinion, it rather showed, that no previous communication had existed between Kohlhaas and Nagelschmidt, and all that he would resolve upon, and that after much delay, was that, according to the suggestion of the president, the letter should be sent to Kohlhaas by Nagelschmidt's man, just as if the fellow was perfectly at liberty, and that then it should be seen whether Kohlhaas would answer it. The man, who had been put in prison, was accordingly brought to the seat of government on the following morning, when the governor of the castle restored him his letter, and, promising that he should be free, and exempt from the punishment he had incurred, told him to give it to the horse-dealer as if nothing had happened. Without more ado, the fellow lent himself to the mean stratagem, and as if by stealth, entered Kohlhaas's room on the pretext of selling some crabs, with which the officer had provided him in the

market-place. Kohlhaas, who read the letter while the children played with the crabs, would certainly, under the circumstances, have taken the fellow by the collar, and delivered him up to the soldiers, who stood at his door, but as, in the present disposition of people towards him, such a step might be interpreted in more than one way, and he was fully convinced that nothing in the world could help him out of the difficulty in which he was placed, he looked mournfully at the fellow's well-known face, asked him where he lived, and ordered him to come again in an hour or two, when he would communicate the resolution he had taken with respect to his master. He told Sternbald, who chanced to enter the room, to buy some crabs of the fellow he found there, and this having been done, and the two men having parted without recognition, he sat down and wrote a letter to Nagelschmidt to the following effect: In the first place he accepted his offer of the command of the band in Altenburg, and in the next told him to send him a waggon with two horses to the Neustadt by Dresden, to free him from the temporary prison in which he was placed with his children. Two horses more, he said, for the sake of speed would be wanted on the road to Wittenberg, by which circuitous route, for certain reasons, too long to specify, he could alone come to him. He represented the soldiers who guarded him as open to bribery, but nevertheless, in case force should be necessary, he desired the presence of a few, stout, active, well-armed fellows in the Neustadt. To defray the expenses of all these preparations he would send by the man a rouleau containing twenty gold crowns, about the expenditure of which he would come to an account with him when the affair was settled. His presence in Dresden on the occasion of his liberation he prohibited as unnecessary, nay, he gave the express order that he should remain in the territory of Altenburg, as the temporary leader of the band, which could not well do without a captain. When the messenger came towards the evening he gave him this letter, and rewarding him liberally, exhorted him to take the greatest care of it. His design was to proceed to Hamburg with his five children, and there to embark for the Levant or the East Indies, or as far as the sky might cover other men than those he knew, for his soul, which was

now bowed down with grief, had given up the notion of getting the horses, to say nothing of his repugnance to make a common cause with Nagelschmidt.

Scarcely had the fellow delivered this answer to the castellan than the high chancellor was removed, the president, Count Kallheim, was appointed chief of the tribunal in his stead, and Kohlhaas, being arrested by a cabinet order of the elector, was thrown into the city prison, heavily laden with chains. Proceedings were commenced against him on the ground of the letter, which was posted up at all the corners of the town; and when, before the bar of the tribunal, to the question of the counsel, who presented him this letter, whether he recognised the handwriting, he answered "Yes," but to the question whether he had any thing to say in his defence, he with downcast eyes answered "No." He was condemned to have his flesh torn with red-hot pincers, and his body quartered and burned between the wheel and the gallows.

Thus stood matters with poor Kohlhaas in Dresden, when the Elector of Brandenburg appeared to rescue him from the hands of arbitrary power and claimed him as a Brandenburg subject in the electoral chancery, through a note sent for that purpose. For the brave Captain Heinrich von Geusau had told him, during a walk on the banks of the Spree, the history of this strange and not utterly abandoned man. On this occasion, urged by the questions of the astonished elector, he could not avoid mentioning the wrong which had been done to his own person, through the improper acts of the high chancellor, Count Siegfried von Kallheim. The elector, being highly indignant at this, demanded an explanation of the high chancellor, and finding that his relationship to the house of Tronka had been the cause of all the mischief, dismissed him at once with many signs of displeasure, and appointed Heinrich von Geusau chancellor in his place.

Now it happened that the kingdom of Poland, while for some cause or other it was in a hostile position against Saxony, made repeated and

pressing demands to the Elector of Brandenburg to unite against Saxony in one common cause. This led the High Chancellor Geusau, who was no novice in such matters, to hope that he could fulfil his sovereign's wish of doing justice to Kohlhaas at any price, without placing the general peace in a more critical position than the consideration due to an individual would justify. Hence the high chancellor, alleging that the proceedings had been arbitrary, and alike displeasing to God and man, not only demanded the immediate and unconditional delivery of Kohlhaas, that in case he was guilty he might be tried according to Brandenburg laws, on a complaint which the court of Dresden might make through an attorney at Berlin, but also required passports for an attorney whom the elector wished to send to Dresden, to obtain justice for Kohlhaas against Squire Wenzel von Tronka, on account of the wrong which had been done the former, on Saxon soil, by the detention of his horses and other acts of violence which cried aloud to Heaven. The chamberlain, Herr Conrad, who on the change of office in Saxony had been nominated president of the state chancery, and who for many reasons did not wish to offend the court of Berlin, in the difficulty in which he now found himself, answered in the name of his sovereign, who was much dejected at the note he had received, that the unfriendly and unfair spirit in which the right of the court of Dresden to try Kohlhaas, according to law, for offences committed in the country, had been questioned, had created great astonishment, especially when it was well known that he held a large piece of ground in the Saxon metropolis, and did not deny that he was a Saxon citizen. Nevertheless, as Poland to enforce her claims had already collected an army of 5000 men on the borders of Saxony, and the high chancellor, Heinrich von Geusau, declared that Kohlhaasenbrück, the place from which the horse-dealer took his name, lay in the Brandenburg territory, and that the execution of the sentence of death that had been declared would be considered a violation of the law of nations, the elector, by the advice of the chamberlain, Herr Conrad himself, who wished to retreat out of the affair, called Prince Christian of Misnia from his estates, and was induced by a few words from this intelligent man to deliver Kohlhaas

to the court of Berlin, in compliance with the request that had been made.

The prince, who, although he was little pleased with the late unseemly proceedings, was obliged to undertake the prosecution of the Kohlhaas affair, in compliance with the wish of his embarrassed sovereign, asked him on what ground he meant to prosecute the horse-dealer, in the chamber council at Berlin. To the fatal letter to Nagelschmidt reference could not be made, so doubtful and obscure were the circumstances under which it was written, neither could the early plunderings and incendiarisms be mentioned on account of the placards in which they had been pardoned.

The elector, therefore, resolved to lay before the Emperor of Vienna a statement of the armed attack of Kohlhaas upon Saxony, to complain of the breach of the public peace, which he had established, and to request those who were bound by no amnesty to prosecute Kohlhaas in the Berlin court through an imperial prosecutor.

In eight days the horse-dealer, chained as he was, was placed in a cart and transported to Berlin with his five children (who had been got together again out of the orphan and foundling asylums) by the night Friedrich von Malzahn, whom the Elector of Brandenburg had sent to Dresden with six troopers.

Now it chanced that the Elector of Saxony, at the invitation of the seneschal (Landdrost) Count Aloysius von Kallheim, who held considerable property on the borders of Saxony, had gone to Dahme to a great hunt, which had been appointed for his recreation, accompanied by the chamberlain, Herr Conrad, and his wife the Lady Heloise, daughter of the seneschal and sister of the president, besides other fine ladies and gentlemen, hunting-attendants, and nobles. All this party, covered with dust from hunting, was seated at table under the cover of some tents adorned with flags, which had been set up on a hill right across the road, waited upon by pages and young nobles,

and recreated by the sound of cheerful music, which proceeded from the trunk of an oak, when the horse-dealer, attended by his army of troopers, came slowly along the road from Dresden.

The sickness of one of Kohlhaas's little delicate children had compelled the Knight von Malzahn, who accompanied him, to remain for three days at Herzberg--a fact which he did not deem it necessary to communicate to the government at Dresden, feeling that he was only responsible to his own prince. The elector, who with his breast half-uncovered, and his plumed hat adorned with fir-twigs, sat by the Lady Heloise--his first love in the days of early youth--said, elevated by the pleasure of the feast, that sparkled round him: "Come let us give the unfortunate man, whoever he may be, this cup of wine!" The Lady Heloise, casting a noble glance at him, arose at once, and laying the whole table under contribution, filled a silver vessel, which a page handed to her, with fruit, cakes, and bread. The whole party, with refreshments of all kinds, had already thronged from the tent, when the seneschal met them with a confused countenance and bade them stop. To the elector, who asked with surprise what had happened thus to confound the seneschal, the latter answered, stammering and with his head turned towards the chamberlain, that Kohlhaas was in the cart. At this piece of intelligence, which astonished every body, as it was generally known that Kohlhaas had set off six days before, the chamberlain, Conrad, took his goblet of wine, and turning towards the tent poured it into the dust. The elector, deeply colouring, placed his on a salver, which a page presented to him for that purpose, at a hint from the chamberlain; and while the knight Friedrich von Malzahn, respectfully greeting the company, whom he did not know, passed slowly through the tent-ropes that ran across the way, in the direction of Dahme, the party, at the invitation of the seneschal, returned to the tent without taking further notice.

As soon as the elector was seated, the seneschal privately sent to Dahme to warn the magistracy there to make the horse-dealer pass on immediately; but as the knight had declared his wish of passing the

night in the place, on the plea that the day had already advanced too far to allow of further travel, they were obliged to bring him without noise to a farm which belonged to the magistracy, and which stood by the road-side concealed by bushes.

Towards evening, when the elector's party had forgotten the whole affair, their thoughts having been dissipated by the wine, and the pleasures of a luxurious supper, the seneschal proposed that they should once more start for a herd of deer which had made its appearance. The whole party seized on the proposal with delight, and armed with their rifles went in pairs over hedges and ditches into the adjoining forest, and the consequence was that the elector and the Lady Heloise, who hung on his arm to witness the spectacle, were to their surprise immediately conducted by a messenger, who had been appointed to attend them, through the court of the very house at which Kohlhaas and the Brandenburg troops were stopping.

The lady, when she heard this, said: "Come, gracious sovereign, come!" adding, as she playfully concealed in his doublet the chain which hung from his neck, "let us slip into the farm, before our troop comes up, and see the strange man who is passing the night there."

The elector, changing colour, seized her hand and said: "Heloise, what notion has possessed you?" But when, perceiving his surprise, she answered that no one would recognise him in his hunting dress, and also, at the very same moment, two hunting attendants, who had already satisfied their curiosity, came out of the house and said, that in consequence of an arrangement of the seneschals, neither the knight nor the horse-dealer knew of whom consisted the party assembled near Dahme, the elector, smiling, pressed his hat over his eyes, and said: "Folly, thou rulest the world, and thy throne is the mouth of a pretty woman."

Kohlhaas was sitting on a heap of straw, with his back against the wall, feeding the child that had fallen sick at Herzberg, with rolls and

milk, when his noble visitors entered the farm-house. The lady, to introduce the conversation, asked him who he was, what was the matter with the child, what crime he had committed, and whither they were conducting him under such an escort. He doffed his leather cap, and, without ceasing from his occupation, gave her a short, but satisfactory answer.

The elector, who stood behind the huntsman, and observed a little leaden case that hung from Michael's neck by a silken thread, asked him, as there was nothing better to talk about, what this meant, and what was kept in it.

"Ah, your worship," said Kohlhaas, detaching it from his neck, opening it, and taking out a little slip of paper fastened with a wafer, "there is something very peculiar about this case. It is about seven months ago, on the very day after my wife's burial, when I had set out from Kohlhaasenbrück, as perhaps you know, to seize the person of Squire von Tronka, who had done me much wrong, that for some negotiation, unknown to me, the electors of Saxony and Brandenburg had a meeting in Jüterboch, a market town, through which my way led me. When they had settled every thing according to their wishes, they went through the streets of the town, conversing in a friendly manner, that they might see the fair, which was held with due merriment. Presently they came to a gipsy woman, who sat upon a stool, and uttered prophesies to the people who surrounded her, out of an almanack.

"This woman they asked, jestingly, whether she had any thing pleasant to tell them. I, who had put up at an inn, with all my band, and chanced to be present at the spot when this occurrence took place, standing at the entrance to the church, could not hear, through the crowd, what the strange woman said to the electors. When the people whispered, laughingly, in each other's ears, that she would not communicate her science to any body, and crowded thickly together on account of the spectacle that was preparing, I got upon a bench,

which had been hewn out in the entrance to the church, not so much because I was curious myself, as because I would make way for those that were. Scarcely had I, from this elevation, taken a full survey of the electors and the woman, who sat before them on the stool, and seemed to be scribbling something, than she suddenly raised herself on her crutches, and, looking round the people, fixed her eyes upon me, who had not spoken a single word to her, and had never cared for such sciences in my life.

"Pressing towards me, through the dense crowd, she said: 'Ah, if the gentleman wishes to know, he had better ask you.' Then, your worship, with her dry, bony hands she gave me this slip. All the people turned round to me, and I said, perfectly astonished, 'Why, mother--what sort of a present is this?' After all sorts of unintelligible stuff, among which, to my great surprise, I heard my own name, she replied, 'It is an amulet, thou horse-dealer, Kohlhaas, keep it well, it will one day save thy life.' And so saying, she vanished. Now!" continued Kohlhaas, good humouredly, "to tell the truth, sharply as matters have been going on in Dresden, they have not cost me my life; and as for Berlin, the future will show me how I get on there, and whether I shall come off well."

At these words the elector seated himself on a bench, and, although to the inquiry of the astonished lady, what was the matter with him, he answered, "Nothing, nothing at all"--he, nevertheless, fell senseless upon the ground, before she had time to run up to him and catch him in her arms.

The Knight von Malzahn, who, on some business or other, entered the room at this moment, said: "Good God, what ails the gentleman?" while the lady cried out, "Water, bring water!"

The huntsmen raised the elector from the ground and carried him to a bed in an adjoining room, and the consternation of all reached its height, when the chamberlain, who had been fetched by a page,

declared, after many futile endeavours to restore the elector to his senses, that there were all the signs of apoplexy.

The seneschal, while the cup-bearer sent a messenger on horseback to Luckau to fetch a physician, caused the elector to be placed in a vehicle, as soon as he opened his eyes, and to be taken, slowly, to his hunting castle in the neighbourhood. The consequence of this journey was two fainting fits after his arrival at the castle, and it was late on the following morning, when the physician from Luckau had arrived, that he recovered in some degree, still with the decided symptoms of an impending nervous fever. As soon as he had regained his senses he raised himself in his bed, and his first inquiry was for Kohlhaas.

The chamberlain, who misunderstood his question, said, seizing his hand, that he need no longer trouble himself about this terrible man, since, as had been designed, he had remained at the farm at Dahme, guarded by the Brandenburg escort, after the sudden and incomprehensible mischance which had occurred. Assuring him of his warmest sympathy, and also that he had reproached his wife most bitterly for her unwarrantable heedlessness in bringing him in contact with the man, he asked what there was so strange and monstrous in the conversation to strike him thus.

The elector said he could only confess that the sight of a worthless slip of paper, worn by the man in a leaden case, had been the cause of the unpleasant occurrence. In explanation of this circumstance he uttered much which the chamberlain did not understand, suddenly assured him, as he pressed his hand, that the possession of this slip would be of the utmost importance, and finally entreated him to mount on horseback without delay, to ride to Dalheim, and to purchase the slip from Kohlhaas at any price.

The chamberlain, who had difficulty in concealing his embarrassment, represented to him, that if this slip was of any value to him, it would be absolutely necessary to conceal the fact from Kohlhaas, since, if he

got a hint of it through any heedless expression, all the wealth of the elector would be insufficient to get it out of the hands of a fellow so insatiable in his vengeance. To calm him, he added that some other means must be devised, and that perhaps it would be possible to gain the slip to which he attached so much importance, by cunning and through the medium of a third indifferent party, as the criminal did not set any value on it.

The elector, wiping the perspiration from his forehead, asked whether it would not be possible with this intent to send to Dahme, and to delay the further transport of the horse-dealer until the slip, in some way or other, was secured.

The chamberlain, who could not trust his senses, replied that in all probability the horse-dealer had unfortunately left Dahme already, and was already over the boundary and on Brandenburg soil, where every endeavour to impede his progress, or to turn him back, must lead to the most unpleasant and lengthened difficulties--such difficulties, indeed, as it might be impossible to get over.

When the elector, with a gesture of utter despair, threw himself back on his cushion in silence, the chamberlain asked him what it was that the slip contained, and by what strange and inexplicable chance he knew that the contents concerned him.

Casting equivocal glances at the chamberlain, whose willingness to oblige him he doubted, the elector made no answer, but lay quite stiff, yet with heart uneasily beating, while his eyes were fixed on the corner of the handkerchief, which, immersed in thought, he held in his hands. All at once he ordered him to call into the chamber the hunting-page (Jagd-junker) Von Stein, an active and sharp-witted young gentleman, whom he had often employed on secret affairs, on the pretext that he had business to settle with him of quite a different nature.

After he had set forth the whole affair to this page, and had informed him of the importance of the slip, now in the possession of Kohlhaas, he asked him whether he was willing to earn an eternal claim to his friendship by getting this slip before Kohlhaas reached Berlin.

The page as soon as he, in some degree, understood the affair, strange as it was, declared that all his powers were at the service of the elector, whereupon the latter commissioned him to ride after Kohlhaas, and in case money would not suffice, as probably it would not, to offer him in a prudently managed discourse, life and liberty as the price of the slip; nay, if he insisted upon it, to supply him at once, though cautiously, with horses, people, and money, to assist him in escaping from the hands of the Brandenburg troopers who escorted him. The page, having obtained from the elector a written authority in his own hand, set off with some attendants, and not allowing his horses any breathing time, he had the good luck to overtake Kohlhaas at a village on the border, where, with the Knight von Malzahn and his five children, he was partaking of a dinner, that was spread before the door of a house in the open air. The Knight von Malzahn, to whom the page introduced himself as a foreigner, who wished to see the remarkable man on his journey, even anticipated his wishes, as he compelled him to sit down to the meal, at the same time introducing him to Kohlhaas. As the knight had affairs to mind, which caused him to absent himself every now and then, and the troopers were dining at a table on the other side of the house, the page soon found an opportunity of telling the horse-dealer who he was, and explaining the particular object of his mission.

The horse-dealer, who had already learned the name and rank of the person who had fainted in the farm-house at Dahme at the sight of the case, and who wanted nothing more to complete the astonishment which the discovery had caused, than an insight into the secrets of the case, which for many reasons he had determined not to open out of mere curiosity,--the horse-dealer, we say, mindful of the unhandsome and unprincely treatment which he had experienced at Dresden, in

spite of his readiness to make every possible sacrifice, declared that he intended to keep the case. To the question of the page, what could induce him to utter so singular a refusal, when nothing less than life and liberty was offered him, Kohlhaas replied:

"Sir, if your sovereign came here in person and said to me, 'I will destroy myself with the troop of those who help to wield the sceptre;' although such destruction is the dearest wish of my soul--I would still refuse him the case, which is even more valuable to him than existence, and would say, 'to the scaffold you can bring me, but I can injure you, and I will.'" And immediately, with death in his face, he called for one of the troopers, ordering him to take a good portion of the repast which still remained in the dish. For the remainder of the hour, which he passed in the village, he never turned towards the page, but treated him, although he sat at the table, as if he was not present, until, when he ascended the cart, he turned round and gave him a farewell look.

The situation of the elector, when he learned the news, grew worse and worse; indeed to such a degree, that the physician, during three portentous days, was in the greatest anxiety for his life, which seemed attacked from more sides than one. However, by the force of his naturally strong constitution, after keeping his bed for several painfully passed weeks, he recovered sufficiently to be removed to a carriage, and thus, with an ample store of cushions and coverlets, to be conveyed to Dresden to the affairs of his government. As soon as he had reached the city he sent for Prince Christian of Misnia, and asked him how matters were going on with respect to the mission of the Councillor Eibenmeyer, who was to be sent to Vienna as attorney in the Kohlhaas affair, to complain to the emperor of the breach of the imperial peace. The prince told him that this councillor had set off to Vienna, in conformity with the instructions, which he had left when he went to Dahme, immediately after the arrival of the Jurist Zäuner, whom the Elector of Brandenburg had sent as attorney to Dresden, to

prosecute the suit about the horses against the Squire Wenzel von Tronka.

The elector, who, deeply colouring, withdrew to his writing-table, expressed his astonishment at this haste, since he had, to his knowledge, declared that the departure of Eibenmeyer was to wait for nearer and more definite instructions, a reference to Dr. Luther, who had procured the amnesty for Kohlhaas, being first necessary. With an expression of suppressed anger, he turned over and over the documents that lay upon the table. The prince, after staring at him for some time in silence, said, that he should be sorry if he had not conducted this affair to the satisfaction of his sovereign, adding, that in the state-council not a word had been said about a reference to Dr. Luther; and that although perhaps at an earlier part of the proceedings it would have been proper to refer to this reverend gentleman, on account of his intercession for Kohlhaas, it was now no longer requisite, since the amnesty had already been broken in the eyes of the whole world, and Kohlhaas had been arrested, and delivered up to the Brandenburg tribunal for judgment and execution.

The elector admitted that the mistake in sending Eibenmeyer was not so great, but expressed his wish that he should not appear at Vienna in his official capacity of prosecutor till he had received further instructions, and told the prince to communicate this to him accordingly through an express. The prince replied that this command came unfortunately a day too late, since Eibenmeyer, according to a notice which had arrived that very day, had appeared in the quality of attorney, and had proceeded to bring the complaint before the state-chancery in Vienna.

When the elector asked with astonishment how this was possible in so short a time, he answered, that three weeks had already elapsed since Eibenmeyer's departure, and that by the instructions which he had received, it was incumbent upon him to despatch the business as soon as possible after his arrival at Vienna. The prince further remarked,

that a delay would, under the circumstances, be so much the more unjustifiable, as the Brandenburg representative, Zäuner, was proceeding against Squire Wenzel von Tronka with the boldest energy, and had already moved the court, that the horses, as a preliminary measure, should be taken out of the hands of the flayer, with a view to their future recovery, and had succeeded in carrying this point in spite of all the objections of the opposite party.

The elector, ringing the bell, said, "Well, no matter!" and after putting some indifferent questions to the prince, such as "how matters stood in Dresden," and "what had been going on in his absence," he shook hands with him, unable any longer to conceal the state of his mind, and dismissed him. On the very same day he sent to him a written request for all the documents relating to the Kohlhaas affair, under the pretext that he would take the management of it into his own hands on account of its political importance. The thought of destroying the man from whom alone he could learn the mysteries of the slip was to him insupportable, so he addressed to the emperor a letter in his own hand, in which he requested him in the most pressing manner, for certain important reasons, which he would perhaps explain more definitely in a short time, to set aside the complaint which Eibenmeyer had brought against Kohlhaas, until some further conclusion had been arrived at.

The emperor, in a note which he despatched through the state chancery, replied that he was greatly astonished at the change in the elector's sentiments, which seemed to have occurred so suddenly, adding, that the information laid before him on the part of Saxony, made the matter of Kohlhaas an affair of the whole sacred Roman empire, that he, the emperor, as the head of that empire, was bound to appear as prosecutor in this suit with the House of Brandenburg; that now the court-assessor, Franz Müller, had gone to Berlin as imperial attorney, for the express purpose of bringing Kohlhaas to account there for a violation of the imperial peace, it would be impossible to set aside the complaint, and that therefore the affair must take its course according to the laws. The elector was completely cast down

by this letter; and when, to his utter confusion, he shortly afterwards received private letters from Berlin announcing the commencement of the proceedings before the chamber-council, and stating that Kohlhaas, in spite of all the endeavours of his advocate, would probably end his days on a scaffold, the unhappy prince resolved to make one attempt more, and he therefore wrote a letter himself to the Elector of Brandenburg, begging for the horse-dealer's life. He pretended that the amnesty which had been promised to the man, would render improper the fulfilment of a capital sentence; assured him, that in spite of the apparent severity of the proceedings against Kohlhaas, it had never been his intention to put him to death; and stated how inconsolable he should be if the protection which seemed to be granted him from Berlin, should by an unexpected turn prove more to his disadvantage than if he had remained in Dresden, and the affair had been decided according to Saxon law.

The Elector of Brandenburg, who perceived much that was obscure and ambiguous in this request, replied by stating that the urgency with which the imperial advocate proceeded would not allow him to depart from the strict injunctions of the law to accede to his (Saxony's) wishes. At the same time he remarked that the anxiety of the Elector of Saxony in this matter seemed to be carried too far, since the complaint against Kohlhaas, which was now before the Berlin chamber-council, and which concerned the crimes pardoned in the amnesty, did not proceed from him who granted it, but from the head of the empire, who was not in any manner bound by it. He also impressed upon him how necessary it was to make a terrible example, seeing that the outrages of Nagelschmidt still continued, and with unparalleled audacity had advanced even to the borders of Brandenburg; and requested him, if he would pay no regard to these reasons, to address himself to his imperial majesty, since, if an edict was to be pronounced in favour of Kohlhaas, it could come from that quarter alone.

The elector, extremely grieved and vexed at all these futile attempts, fell into a new illness, and when one morning the chamberlain visited him, he showed him the letters which he had addressed to the courts of Vienna and Berlin, for the purpose of obtaining a reprieve for Kohlhaas, and thus at least of gaining time to possess himself of the slip which he had with him.

The chamberlain threw himself on his knees before him, and requested him by all that was dear and sacred to tell him what this slip contained.

The elector said, that he might bolt the room and sit down upon the bed, and after he had taken his hand, and pressed it to his heart with a sigh, he began as follows: "Your wife, as I understand, has already told you that the Elector of Brandenburg and I, on the third day of the meeting, which we had in Jüterboch, met a gipsy. When the elector, who is of sportive disposition, resolved by a jest to demolish in the sight of the people the fame of this extraordinary woman, whose art had been the subject of unseemly conversation at table, and asked her, on account of the prophecy which she was about to utter, to give him a sign that might be tested that very day, alleging that he could not otherwise believe what she said, were she the Roman sybil herself. The woman, taking a cursory view of us from head to foot, said that the sign would be this: that the great roebuck, which the gardener's son reared in the park, would meet us in the market where we stood before we left it. You must know that this roebuck, being intended for the Dresden kitchen, was kept under lock and bolt, in a partition fenced round with high laths, and shaded by the oaks of the park. As on account of other smaller game and birds the park and the garden besides were kept carefully closed, it was not easy to see how the animal, in accordance with the strange prediction, would come to the place where we stood. Nevertheless the elector, fearing some trick, and resolved to put to shame all that the woman might say, for the sake of the jest, sent to the castle, with orders that the roebuck should be killed at once, and got ready for the table at an early day. He then

turned back to the woman, who had spoken about this matter aloud, and said: 'Now, what have you to tell me about the future?' The woman, looking into his hand said: 'Hail to my lord the elector! Your grace will long reign, the house from which thou descendest will long endure, and thy descendants will become great and glorious, and attain power above all the princes and lords of the world.' The elector, after a pause, during which he eyed the woman thoughtfully, said half aside, and stepping up to me, that he was almost sorry he had sent a messenger to annihilate the prophecy, and when the money, from the hands of the knights who followed him, poured into the woman's lap, amid loud huzzas, he asked her, putting his hand in his pocket, and giving a piece of gold, whether the greeting she would give to me had such a silvery sound as his own. The woman, after she had opened a box which stood beside her, had very deliberately put the money in it, arranging it according to description and quantity, and had closed the lid again, held her hand before the sun as if the light annoyed her, and looked at me. When I repeated the question, and said jestingly to the elector, while she examined my hand, 'It seems that she has nothing very pleasant to tell me,' she seized her crutch, rose slowly from her stool, and approaching me with hands mysteriously held out, whispered distinctly into my ear, 'No!--'So!' said I, somewhat confused, and I receded a step back from the figure, who with a glance as cold and lifeless as that from eyes of marble, again seated herself on the stool which stood behind her. 'Pray from what side does danger threaten my house?' The woman taking up a bit of charcoal and a slip of paper, and crossing her knees, asked me whether she should write it down; and when I, with some confusion, because under the circumstances there was nothing else left to do, answered 'Yes, do so,' she replied: 'Very good, I will write down three things--the name of the last ruler of thy house, the year when he will lose his kingdom, and the name of him who will take it by force of arms.' Having finished her task in the sight of the whole mob, she fastened together the slip with a wafer, which she moistened with her withered mouth and pressed upon it a leaden ring which she wore upon her middle finger. I was curious beyond expression, as you may easily conceive,

to take the slip, but she said: 'By no means, your highness,' adding as she turned round and raised one of her crutches, 'from that man yonder, who with the plumed hat is standing behind all the people on the bench in the entrance of the church, you may get the paper if you choose.' And at once, while I was standing perfectly speechless with astonishment, and had not rightly made out what she said, she left me, and packing up the box which stood behind her and flinging it over her back, mingled with the surrounding crowd, so that I was unable to see her. It was a great consolation to me at this moment that the knight, whom the elector had sent to the castle, now returned and told him laughing, that the roebuck had been killed and dragged into the kitchen by two hunters before his eyes.

"The elector, merrily putting his arm into mine, with the intention of leading me from the spot, said: 'Good! the prophecy turns out to be a mere common-place trick, not worth the time and money which it has cost us.' But how great was our astonishment, when, at the very time he was speaking these words, a cry was raised, and all eyes were turned towards a great butcher's dog which came running from the castle-court, and which, having seized the roebuck in the kitchen, as good spoil, had borne it off by the nape of the neck, and now dropped it about three paces from us, followed by a troop of servants, male and female. Thus was the woman's prophecy, which she had uttered as a guarantee for all the rest that she predicted, completely fulfilled, as the roebuck had indeed met us in the marketplace, although it was dead. The lightning which falls from heaven on a winter's day, cannot strike with more annihilating effect than that which this sight produced on me; and my first attempt, after I had freed myself from the persons about me, was to find out the man with the plumed hat, whom the woman had designated; but although my people were employed for three days uninterruptedly, in seeking information, not one of them was in a condition to give me the slightest intelligence on the subject. Now, friend Conrad, a few weeks ago, in the farm at Dahme, I saw the man with my own eyes."

Having finished this narrative, the elector let the chamberlain's hand fall, and sank back on his couch, wiping off the perspiration. The chamberlain, who thought every attempt to oppose or correct the elector's view of the case would be fruitless, entreated him to try some plan to obtain possession of the slip, and then to leave the fellow to his fate; but the elector replied, that he could see no plan at all, although the thought of going without the paper, and of seeing all knowledge of it perish with Kohlhaas, made him almost desperate. To his friend's question, whether he had made any efforts to discover the gipsy herself, he answered that the government (Gubernium), in pursuance of a command which he had sent forth under a false pretext, had in vain sought for the woman to that day, in all the public places in the electorate, while, from other reasons which he declined to communicate more explicitly, he expressed his doubts whether she was to be found in Saxony. It chanced that the chamberlain wished to travel to Berlin for the sake of some considerable property in the Neumark, to which his wife had become entitled by the bequest of the High Chancellor Kallheim, who died soon after he was displaced; and, therefore, as he really was much attached to the elector, he asked him, after a short deliberation, whether he would let him act quite at liberty in this matter.

The elector, pressing the chamberlain's hand with warmth against his breast, answered: "Consider that you are myself, and get the paper;" and, therefore, the chamberlain, having entrusted his office to other hands, hastened his journey by a day or two, and, leaving his wife behind, set off for Berlin, accompanied only by some servants.

Kohlhaas, who, as we have already said, had in the meanwhile arrived at Berlin, and by the special order of the elector had been put in a state prison, made as comfortable as possible for the reception of him and his five children, was, immediately after the appearance of the imperial attorney from Vienna, brought before the chamber council charged with a breach of the imperial peace. Although he said, in answer, that he could not be prosecuted for his armed attack in

Saxony, and the violence he had there committed, by virtue of the agreement made with the Elector of Saxony, at Lützen, he was informed that of that agreement the emperor, whose attorney conducted this complaint, could take no cognizance. When the matter was explained to him, and he heard, besides, with reference to his affair at Dresden, that he would have ample justice against Squire Wenzel von Tronka, he readily submitted. The very day on which the chamberlain arrived, sentence was passed against Kohlhaas, and he was condemned to be put to death with the sword;--a sentence which, seeing how complicated was the state of affairs, no one believed would be executed, notwithstanding its mildness; nay, the whole city, knowing the good feeling of the elector towards Kohlhaas, firmly hoped that the capital punishment, by a special edict, would be commuted into a long and severe imprisonment.

The chamberlain seeing at once that no time was to be lost, if he would fulfil his sovereign's commission, went to work, by appearing one morning, sedulously attired in his usual court-dress, before Kohlhaas, who was innocently watching the passers-by from the window of his prison. Concluding, from a sudden movement of his head, that the horse-dealer had perceived him, and particularly observing, with great delight, how the latter clutched, involuntarily, at the part of his breast, where the case was situated, he judged, that what had passed in the mind of Kohlhaas at that moment, was a sufficient preparation to advance one step further in the attempt to gain possession of the paper.

He, therefore, called to him an old rag-woman, who was hobbling about on crutches, and whom he had observed in the streets of Berlin among a host of others, who were trafficking in the same commodity. This woman, in age and attire seemed to bear a pretty close resemblance to the one whom his elector had described, and as he thought that Kohlhaas would have no clear recollection of the features of the gipsy, who had only appeared for a moment when she gave him the case, he resolved to pass off this old woman for the other one, and

if possible to let her take the part of the gipsy before Kohlhaas. To put her in a proper position to play this part, he informed her, circumstantially, of all that had passed between the two electors and the gipsy at Jüterboch, not forgetting to tell her the three mysterious articles contained in the paper, as he did not know how far the gipsy might have gone in her explanations to Kohlhaas. After explaining to her what she must let fall in an incoherent or unintelligible manner, for the sake of certain plans that had been devised to obtain the paper, either by force or stratagem--a matter of great importance to the Saxon court--he charged her to ask Kohlhaas for it, under the pretext of keeping it for a few eventful days, as it was no longer safe in his possession. The woman, on the promise of a considerable reward, part of which the chamberlain, at her request, was forced to give beforehand, at once undertook to perform the required office; and as the mother of the man, Herse, who had fallen at Mühlberg, sometimes visited Kohlhaas, with the permission of the government, and this woman had been acquainted with her for some months, she succeeded in visiting Kohlhaas at an early day, with the help of a small present to the gaoler.

Kohlhaas, as soon as she entered, thought that by the seal-ring, which she wore on her finger, and the coral chain which hung from her neck, he recognised the old gipsy who had given him the can at Jüterboch. Indeed, as probability is not always on the side of truth, so was it here; for something happened which we certainly record, but which every one who chooses is at liberty to doubt. The fact is, the chamberlain had committed the most monstrous blunder, the old woman whom he had picked up in the streets of Berlin to imitate the gipsy, being no other than the mysterious gipsy herself whom he wished to be imitated. The woman leaning on her crutches, and patting the cheeks of the children, who, struck by her strange aspect, clung to their father, told him that she had for some time left Saxony for Brandenburg, and in consequence of a heedless question asked by the chamberlain in the streets of Berlin, about the gipsy who was in Jüterboch in the spring of the past year, had at once hurried to him,

and under a false name had offered herself for the office which he wished to see fulfilled.

The horse-dealer remarked a singular likeness between this woman and his deceased wife Lisbeth: indeed he could almost have asked her if she were not her grandmother; for not only did her features, her hands, which, bony as they were, were still beautiful, and especially the use which she made of these while talking, remind him of Lisbeth most forcibly, but even a mole by which his wife's neck was marked, was on the gipsy's neck also.

Hence, amid strangely conflicting thoughts, he compelled her to take a seat, and asked her what possible business of the chamberlain's could bring her to him.

The woman, while Kohlhaas's old dog went sniffing about her knees, and wagged his tail while she patted him, announced that the commission which the chamberlain had given her, was to tell him how the paper contained a mysterious answer to three questions of the utmost importance to the Saxon court, to warn him against an emissary who was at Berlin, with the design of taking it, and to ask for the paper herself, under the pretext that it was no more safe in his own bosom. The real design of her coming was, however, to tell him that the threat of depriving him of the paper, by force or cunning, was completely idle, that he had not the least cause to feel any apprehension about it, under the protection of the Elector of Brandenburg--nay, that the paper was much safer with him than with her, and that he should take great care not to lose it, by delivering it to any one under any pretext whatever. However, she added by saying, that she thought it prudent to use the paper for the purpose for which she had given it to him at the Jüterboch fair, to listen to the offer which had been made to him on the borders by the page, von Stein, and to give the paper, which could be of no further use to him, to the Elector of Saxony, in exchange for life and liberty.

Kohlhaas, who exulted in the power which was given him, of mortally wounding his enemy's heel, at the very moment when it trampled him in the dust, replied, "Not for the world, good mother; not for the world!" and pressing the old woman's hand, only desired to know, what were the answers to the important questions contained in the paper.

The woman, taking in her lap the youngest child, who was crouching down at her feet, said, "No--not for the world, Kohlhaas the horse-dealer; but for the sake of this pretty little fair-haired boy." So saying, she smiled at him, embraced him, and kissed him; while he stared at her with all his might, and gave him with her dry hands an apple, which she carried in her pocket.

Kohlhaas said, in some confusion, that even the children, if they were old enough, would commend him for what he had done, and that he could not do any thing more serviceable for them and their posterity than keep the paper. He asked, besides, who, after the experience he had already made, would secure him against fresh deception, and whether he might not sacrifice the paper to the elector, just as uselessly, as he had formerly sacrificed the troop which he collected at Lützen. "With him who has once broken his word," said he, "I have nothing more to do, and nothing, good mother, but your demand, definitively and unequivocally expressed, will cause me to part with the slip by which, in such a remarkable manner, satisfaction is given me for all that I have suffered."

The woman, setting the child down upon the ground, said, that he was right in many respects, and could do and suffer what he pleased; and, taking her crutch again in her hand, prepared to go.

Kohlhaas repeated his question respecting the contents of the strange paper; and when she answered him hastily, that he might open it, if only out of curiosity, he wished to be informed about a thousand things more before she quitted him; such as who she was; how she

acquired her science; why she had refused to give the wonderful paper to the elector, for whom it was written, and had just selected him, who had never cared about her science, among so many thousand persons.

At this very moment a noise was heard, made by some police officers, who were coming up stairs, and the woman, who seemed suddenly afraid lest she should be found by them in these apartments, answered: "Farewell till we meet again, Kohlhaas! When we meet again, you shall have knowledge of all this." Turning towards the door, she cried, "Good-bye, children, good-bye!" and kissing the little folks one after the other, she departed.

In the meanwhile the Elector of Saxony, entirely given up to his melancholy thoughts, had summoned two astrologers named Oldenholm and Olearius, who then stood in high repute in Saxony, and had consulted them as to the contents of the mysterious paper, which was of such high import to himself and the whole race of his posterity. When these men, after a deep inquiry, which had continued for three days in the castle at Dresden, could not agree whether the prophecy referred to distant ages or to the present time, while perhaps the crown of Poland, the relations with which were so warlike, might be pointed at,--the uneasiness, not to say the despair of the unhappy prince, far from being lessened by the learned dispute, was rendered more acute, and that to a degree perfectly insupportable. About the same time, the chamberlain charged his wife, who was on the point of following him to Berlin, to point out to the elector before her departure, how doubtful, after the failure of the attempt he had made with the old woman, whom he had never seen since--how doubtful was the hope of obtaining the paper now in the possession of Kohlhaas, since the sentence of death had already been signed by the Elector of Brandenburg after a careful examination of the documents, and the execution was already appointed for the Monday after Palm-Sunday.

At this intelligence, the Elector of Saxony, whose heart was rent with grief and remorse, shut himself up in his room for two days, during which, being weary of his life, he tasted no food. On the third day, he suddenly disappeared from Dresden, giving a short notice to the Gubernium that he was going to the Prince of Dessau to hunt. Where he actually went, and whether he did turn to Dessau, we must leave undecided, since the chronicles from the comparison of which we obtain our information, are singularly contradictory upon this point. So much is certain, that the Prince of Dessau, unable to hunt, lay sick at this time, with his uncle, Duke Henry, in Brunswick, and that the Lady Heloise on the evening of the following day, accompanied by a Count Königstein, whom she called her cousin, entered the room of her husband, the chamberlain.

In the meantime, the sentence of death was read to Kohlhaas at the elector's request, and the papers relating to his property, which had been refused him at Dresden, were restored to him. When the councillors, whom the tribunal had sent to him, asked him how his property should be disposed of after his death, he prepared a will in favour of his children, with the assistance of a notary, and appointed his good friend the farmer at Kohlhaasenbrück their guardian. Nothing could equal the peace and contentment of his last days, for by a special order of the elector, the prison in which he was kept was thrown open, and a free approach to him was granted to all his friends, of whom many resided in the city. He had the further satisfaction of seeing the divine, Jacob Freysing, as a delegate from Doctor Luther, enter his dungeon, with a letter in Luther's own hand (which was doubtless very remarkable, but has since been lost), and of receiving the holy sacrament from the hands of this reverend gentleman, in the presence of two deans of Brandenburg.

At last the portentous Monday arrived, on which he was to atone to the world for his too hasty attempt to procure justice, and still the city was in general commotion, not being able to give up the hope that some decree would yet come to save him. Accompanied by a strong

guard, and with his two boys in his arms--a favour he had expressly asked at the bar of the tribunal--he was stepping from the gate of his prison, led by Jacob Freysing, when, through the midst of a mournful throng of acquaintance who shook hands with him and bade him farewell, the castellan of the electoral castle pressed forward to him with a disturbed countenance, and gave him a note which he said he had received from an old woman. Kohlhaas, while he looked upon the man, who was little known to him, with astonishment, opened the note, the seal of which, impressed on a wafer, reminded him of the well-known gipsy. Who can describe his astonishment when he read as follows:

"KOHLHAAS,--The Elector of Saxony is in Berlin. He is gone before thee to the place of execution; and thou mayest know him, if, indeed, it concerns thee, by a hat with blue and white feathers. I need not tell thee the purpose for which he comes. As soon as thou art buried, he will dig up the case, and have the paper opened which it contains.

"THY ELIZABETH."

Kohlhaas, turning to the castellan in the greatest astonishment, asked him if he knew the wonderful woman who had given him the note.

The castellan began to answer: "Kohlhaas, the woman----" but he stopped short in the middle of his speech; and Kohlhaas, being carried along by the train, which proceeded at this moment, could not hear what the man, who seemed to tremble in every limb, was saying to him. When he came to the place of execution, he found the Elector of Brandenburg on horseback there, with his train, among whom was the Chancellor Heinrich von Geusau, in the midst of an immense concourse of people. To the right of the elector stood the imperial advocate, Franz Müller, with a copy of the sentence in his hand, while on his left, with the decree of the Dresden Court chamber, was his own advocate, the jurist Anton Zäuner. In the midst of the half-open circle formed by the people, was a herald with a bundle of things and

the two horses, now sleek and in good condition, beating the ground with their hoofs. For the Chancellor Henry had carried every point of the suit, which, in the name of his master, he had commenced at Dresden against Squire Wenzel von Tronka; and consequently the horses, after they had been restored to honour by the ceremony of waving a flag over their heads, had been taken out of the hands of the flayer, and, having been fattened by the squire's men, had been handed over to the advocate in the Dresden market, in the presence of a commission appointed for the purpose. Therefore, the elector, when Kohlhaas, attended by the guard, ascended the court to him, said: "Now, Kohlhaas, this is the day on which you have justice. Here I give you back all which you were forced to lose at the Tronkenburg, your horses, handkerchief, money, linen, and the expenses for medical attendance on your man, Herse, who fell at Mühlberg. Are you content with me?"

Kohlhaas, while with open, sparkling eyes, he read over the decree which was put into his hands, at a hint from the chancellor, put down the two children whom he carried, and when he found in it an article, by which Squire Wenzel was condemned to be imprisoned for two years, quite overcome by his feelings, he threw himself down before the elector, with his hands crossed on his breast. Joyfully assuring the chancellor, as he arose, and laid his hand on his bosom, that his highest wish on earth was fulfilled, he went up to the horses, examined them, and patted their fat necks, cheerfully telling the chancellor, as he returned to him, that he made a present of them to his two sons, Henry and Leopold.

The chancellor, Henry von Geusau, bending down to him from his horse with a friendly aspect, promised him in the name of the elector, that his last bequest should be held sacred, and requested him to dispose of the other things in the bundle according to his pleasure. Upon this Kohlhaas called out of the mob Herse's old mother, whom he perceived in the square, and giving her the things, said, "Here,

mother, this belongs to you," adding, at the same time, the sum which was in the bundle, to pay damages, as a comfort for her old days.

The elector then cried, "Now, Kohlhaas, the horse-dealer, thou to whom satisfaction has been thus accorded, prepare to give satisfaction thyself for the breach of the public peace."

Kohlhaas, taking off his hat, and throwing it down, said, that he was ready, and giving the children, after he had once more lifted them up and pressed them to his heart, to the farmer of Kohlhaasenbrück, he stepped up to the block, while the farmer, silently weeping, led the children from the place. He then took the handkerchief from his neck, and opened his doublet, when taking a cursory glance at the circle of people, he perceived at a short distance from himself, between two knights, who nearly concealed him, the well-known man with the blue and white plumes. Kohlhaas, bringing himself close to him by a sudden step, which astonished the surrounding guard, took the case from his breast. Taking the paper out, he opened it, read it, and fixing his eye on the man with the plume, who began to entertain hopes, put it into his mouth and swallowed it. At this sight, the man with the blue and white feathers fell down in convulsions. Kohlhaas, while the man's astonished attendants stooped down and raised him from the ground, turned to the scaffold, where his head fell beneath the axe of the executioner. Thus ends the history of Kohlhaas.

The corpse was put into a coffin, amid the general lamentations of the people. While the bearers were raising it to bury it decently in the suburban church-yard, the elector called to him the sons of the deceased, and dubbed them knights, declaring to the chancellor, that they should be brought up in his school of pages. The Elector of Saxony, wounded in mind and body, soon returned to Dresden, and the rest concerning him must be sought in his history. As for Kohlhaas, some of his descendants, brave, joyous people, were living in Mecklenburg in the last century.

[1] On one point the translator of this tale solicits the indulgence of his critical readers. A great number of official names and legal terms occur, the technical meaning of which could not properly be defined by any one but a German jurist. As these names have no exact equivalents in English, the names into which they are here translated may appear arbitrary. The translator can only say that, where exactitude was impossible, he has done his best.

[2] "Squire" is used as an equivalent for "Junker." "Castellan" is put for "Burgvoigt" and "Schlossvoigt."

[3] "Gerichtsherr" means lord of the manor with right of judicature.

[4] "Amtmann" means here a farmer of crown-lands.

[5] That is a subject of another state, here Brandenburg.