On 4 and 7 June and 7 July 1828 the Mayor of Nuremberg, Jakob Friedrich Binder, in his capacity as head of the city’s police force, cross-examined Kaspar Hauser. No records survive of these interviews, but on 14 July the Mayor published an account of the Kaspar Hauser case, an affair which by now was widely discussed throughout Bavaria and beyond, which states what he had learnt from the foundling. Binder offered rich rewards for anyone who could shed any light on this mysterious affair. The Mayor gave a detailed account of what had happened since Kaspar’s arrival in Nuremberg and pointed out the large number of ‘doctors, teachers, educators, psychologists, police officers, lawyers, the most acute observers from all classes, and the countless number of people who have taken a personal interest in his previously tragic fate’ all came to the conclusion that he was of sound mind and that his retarded behaviour was due solely to the circumstances of his youth.

The Mayor said that Kaspar had been kept in a cellar with an earthen floor and a wooden roof. He had worn a loose shirt and leather breeches that opened at the back and which were held up by braces. His feet were bare. There were two small rectangular windows against which wood was piled so that sunlight never entered the cell. He had two wooden horses which were painted white, the larger one was not more than from 12 to 15 inches high. He also had a small white wooden dog. There was a container with a lid which served as a commode. He slept on a sack filled with straw. Since he could hardly walk he played with his wooden animals on the floor. There was a small door, bolted on the outside. The cellar was heated by a small, white, bee-hive shaped stove which was stoked from outside. When he woke up in the morning he found that bread and water had been placed in front of his bed, and
that the commode had been emptied. He claimed that his hair and nails were cut and his shirt changed while he was asleep.

One day a man appeared and announced that he was the person who brought him bread and water and had given him the horses. He said that he now had to learn to read and write and that he would then bring him to his father who was a cavalryman. His gaoler warned him that there was a heaven above in which lived a god who would get angry and punish him if he tried to escape. One night the gaoler came and told him they were to leave, dressed him, and they set off up a high mountain. The stranger had to teach him how to walk which he found very difficult, especially as he was barefoot. On the third day the stranger gave him a change of clothes and a pair of boots. During their journey he tried to teach Kaspar to say the rosary, but although he could remember the Lord’s Prayer he could not remember the other prayer. They slept in the open, in spite of the cold and the rain, and lived off bread and water. When they reached Nuremberg the stranger gave Kaspar a letter and told him to go into the city and show it to ‘a lad’. Kaspar was reluctant to set off on his own, but the stranger promised that he would follow him. He found his way to the city gate, walked on until he attracted the attention of the good cobbler Weickmann.

The Mayor waxed eloquent in his description of Kaspar’s sufferings, his acute sensitivity to sounds, light and smells, his inability to eat anything other than bread or drink anything other than water, his extreme nervousness and a walk that was no better than a two-year-old’s. He praised his open and honest expression, his innocence (particularly in sexual matters), his gentleness, kindness to animals, warm-heartedness, eagerness to learn, love of order and cleanliness, and the purity of his spirit. He argued that Kaspar Hauser was a thoroughly admirable young man who had been denied a normal childhood by criminals who had taken him away from his home and from a family which he assumed was of the best. Kaspar had thus been robbed of a family and fortune, the privileges of his station and the innocent delights of childhood; and he had been denied a proper education and upbringing. He was thus the innocent victim of a monstrous crime. Binder insisted that the authorities should do everything in their power to uncover this crime and promised that the city of Nuremberg would protect and nurture him as providence ordained. The citizens of Nuremberg responded generously and Kaspar was swamped with toys, clothes and books from his many well-wishers.

Appended to this notice was a reproduction of the two letters Kaspar had given to the Major, a description of the boy and of the clothes he