

The forester's son must now seat himself on the shoulders of the dwarf on the topmost rung of the ladder ; and see ! the ladder is wide enough to permit them to descend between the thick line of lamp-bearing dwarfs on either hand.

No sooner had they reached the base than dwarfs, lights, and ladder had vanished.

Then came the old Hibich, took him by the hand, and said : " As thou hast been on the summit of the Hibichenstein, and hast suffered so much anxiety and terror, thou shalt also see the Dwarf-King's castle."

Then they entered through a great arched door into the mountain, and the King conducted him to a large room, where stood chairs and a table.

The walls glittered with pure ore, the ceiling was a single piece of ponderous spar, white as the driven snow, and from it hung a chandelier of mountain crystal and precious stones.

The floor was strewn with branches of firs, and the panels shimmered with gold and jewels.

In the centre of this superb chamber stood a table of hematite ; before it a silver chair, upon which the Dwarf-King seated himself, and commanded his companion also to sit down.

Then he struck with a silver rapier upon the table of hematite, which produced a tone the sweetness of which was never heard before.

A thousand tiny female forms appeared in answer to the summons, bearing strawberries and raspberries ;