

**THE ROYAL BANNER; OR, GOLD
AND RUBIES. A STORY FOR
YOUNG; BY THE AUTHOR OF
"LITTLE SNOWDROP AND HER
GOLDEN CASKET."**

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The Royal Banner; Or, Gold and Rubies. A Story for Young; By the Author of "Little Snowdrop and Her Golden Casket." by Anonymous

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ANONYMOUS

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THE WISHING-WELL.

*"Amid the purple heather the well lay; clear and cool, soft green
moss grew close round it; and ferns hung over its sides in grace-
ful beauty."—Page 21.*

THE ROYAL BANNER;

OR,

GOLD AND RUBIES.

A Story for the Young.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"LITTLE SNOWDROP AND HER GOLDEN CASKET."

Stand up: stand up for Jesus!
Ye soldiers of the cross;
Lift high His royal banner—
It must not suffer loss!



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1879.

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THE ROYAL BANNER.

CHAPTER I.

THE WISHING-WELL.

The well was deep, and the water,
From some mysterious spring,
Was ever gushing far below
With a tender murmuring,
And deep under ground a tiny rill
Sate on in the dark to sing.

“OW lovely it is! only see, Aunt Charlotte! It is mine, you say? oh, I wish I were old enough to wear it! The rubies are beautiful; how they sparkle!”

The speaker herself was a pretty sight, —a blue-eyed, brown-haired little maiden of about twelve years old, dressed in a bright-coloured print frock, with a jacket to match, finished off at the neck and round the loose sleeves with a pretty crimped frill. She was standing at the moment we write of at a window in an old-fashioned country

mansion in the Highlands of Scotland, carefully poising on her fingers a beautiful diadem, composed of gold and rubies, which latter glistened brightly as the rays of the autumn sun played on them.

The lady she addressed as aunt was engaged in writing, and hardly seemed to notice the child's words; but a bright-looking boy, perhaps a year older than his sister—for such she was—looked up admiringly at the costly ornament. "Well, it is a beauty, Nora, the gold 'specially. I wish I had it, I know,—the gold, I mean, not the diadem;" and he laughed as he added, "Fancy me wearing a diadem!—but it suits you to perfection."

"Children," said their aunt, who had put aside the letter she had been writing and come towards the couple, "take care what you are about. Put the diadem back into its casket carefully, and then give it to me to lock up in the old escritoire. So you both like it?"

Two voices answered in one breath, "Oh, so much, aunt!"

"Nora admires the rubies, but I like the gold," said Eric. "But are not they both beautiful?"

The lady thus appealed to looked down for a moment, thoughtfully, at the rich casket in which Nora had enclosed her treasure. "Yes," she said;