

**CALIFORNIA GOLD-FIELD  
SCENES: SELECTIONS  
FROM QUIEN SABE'S  
GOLD-FIELD MANUSCRIPTS**

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California gold-field scenes: selections from Quien Sabe's gold-field manuscripts by R. W. Bigham

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**R. W. BIGHAM**

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California  
Gold-field Scenes:

Selections from

Quien Sabe's Gold-field Manuscripts.

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BY REV. R. W. BIGHAM,

Of the North Georgia Conference. Author of "Vanny Lee's Trip to the Golden Shore."

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Introduction by A. G. Haygood, D.D., LL.D.



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Belcher  
(J. M. H.)

#### EDITOR'S NOTE.

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THE "California Gold-field Scenes" will give many pleasant hours to the traveler by land or sea. The Author's style is peculiar, but it was inspired by his surroundings in the strange and marvelous country that has opened many new chapters in the history of the world. There are no dull descriptions, no tedious notes of travel, no wearisome reflections. Every thought is fresh and bright and new, and as striking as the scenery depicted in the volume. Young readers will be amused and instructed, and those of more matured experience will recognize the thrilling power of the Author's pen.

Nashville, April, 1866.

W. P. HARRISON,  
*Book Editor.*

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## INTRODUCTION.

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It was years ago the good fortune of the writer of this introductory note to bring to the acquaintance of the young people of the firesides and Sunday-schools in the South a little book that made more friends than almost any other that has been issued by the Southern press. "Vinny Leal" and her "Trip to the Golden Shore" has held the fascinated attention of many thousands. As the booksellers say, "Vinny" had "a great run," many thousand copies having been printed and sold. It found a place in most of our Sunday-school libraries, and was read and read till worn out. And no wonder; for, while its author bound himself by none of the conventional rules of book-making, he somehow "had a knack" of making people see what he had seen, hear what he had heard, know and love the people he had known and loved. The writer of this Introduction saw in the Publishing House at Nashville what he never saw elsewhere—a printer break into tears while "setting up copy" for "Vinny Leal;" and he confesses to a similar

experience while "reading proof" as the book was "passing through the press."

The scenes, incidents, narratives, and characters that make up the body and soul of the "California Gold-field Scenes" will—if people's tastes and dispositions have not changed very much during the last fifteen years—make for this little book among the young people of to-day fully as many friends as learned to love "Vinny Leal;" while many who laughed and wept with the saintly maiden long ago will for their own sakes read what "Quien Sabe" has to tell them of the wonder-land on the Pacific. And not a few of these children of 1873 who took delight in "Vinny Leal" will now find a sweeter pleasure in reading the "California Gold-field Scenes" to their children of 1886.

The regulation critics will hardly approve the style and manner of our author. One would be glad to please them, if it did not cost too much; yet their approval is not necessary to the success or usefulness of a book. The conventional publisher's manuscript "taster" does not always know a book when he samples it. The history of books "declined with thanks" by prudent publishers would itself make a large and entertaining—perhaps instructive—volume. We may be

sure that Bunyan's "Pilgrim" was not approved when first he sought acquaintance with publishers. It is almost incredible, but the informed on such subjects tell us that "Robinson Crusoe" was declined by publisher after publisher and returned to its author. After a long waiting a plucky publisher, who had little to lose by his venture, braved the critics and gave "Robinson Crusoe" to type and leather. Thackeray failed to find a publisher of "Vanity Fair," and was obliged to bring it out as a magazine serial story. It is said of the most charming of story-tellers of our times—Hans Christian Anderson—that his first venture was declined by every publisher in Copenhagen.

It is vain to criticise the structure of "Queen Sabe's" sentences, or the peculiarities of his idiom; it is as irrelevant to measure his "style" by the classics of English composition as to test the merits of a poem written in a newly invented meter by the verse of Virgil or Pope. Enough for his purpose he has of style; he makes us camp with him, dig gold with him, see the cascades and the sunsets, and hear the many voices of the day and night in the California gold-fields, as he saw and heard them.

So many evil things creep into young peo-