

THE GOOD KING WAMBA.

Long had the Goths been lords of Spain. Chief after chief had they chosen, king after king had they served; and, though it was young in time, Gothic Spain was growing old in years. It reached its golden age in the time of "Good King Wamba," a king of fancy as much as of fact, under whom Spain became a land of Arcady, everybody was happy, all things prospered, and the tide of evil events for a space ceased to flow.

In those days, when a king died and left no son, the Goths elected a new one, seeking their best and worthiest, and holding the election in the place where the old king had passed away. It was in the little village of Gerticos, some eight miles from the city of Valladolid, that King Recesuinto had sought health and found death. Hither came the electors, —the great nobles, the bishops, and the generals,— and here they debated who should be king, finally settling on a venerable Goth named Wamba, the one man of note in all the kingdom who throughout his life had declined to accept rank and station.

The story goes that their choice was aided by miracle. In those days miracles were "as plentiful as blackberries"; but the essence of many of them seems to have been what we call common sense or political shrewdness. St. Leo told them to seek a