9. Wright, R. E.—Reports of the Madras Eye Hospital, 1923.
10. Collins and Mayou.—"System of Ophthalmic Practice" (Pyle). Wm. Heinemann, London.
11. Butler, T. Harrison.—*Brit. Med. Jl.*, Vol. I, p. 945, 1924.
12. Smith, H., cited Fisher, W. A.—"Senile Cataract." Chicago, Ill., U.S.A., 1923.
13. Kalt, M.—*Ann. d'Ocul.*, Vol. CXLIII, p. 436 1910.
14. Fisher, W. A.—"Senile Cataract." Chicago, Ill., U.S.A., 1923.
15. Starling, E. H.—"Principles of Human Physiology." J. & A. Churchill, London, 1920.
16. Smith, F. F. Strother.—*Ind. Med. Gaz.*, Vol. LVIII, No. 5, p. 208, 1923.
17. Kirkpatrick, H.—"Cataract and its Treatment." Oxford Medical Publications, 1921.
18. Barkan, Hans.—*Jl. Amer. Med. Assoc.*, Vol. LXXXI, No. 25, p. 2086, 1923.
19. Cruickshank, M. M.—*Ind. Med. Gaz.*, Vol. LVIII, No. 10, p. 461, 1923.
20. Villard, H.—*Bull. Soc. franç d'Ophtal.*, 1919. *Brit. Jl. of Ophtal.*, Vol. IV, p. 521, abs. 1920.

EDWARD THE CONFESSOR'S PHYSICIAN : AN OPHTHALMIC NOTE

BY

R. R. JAMES

LONDON

LEOFSTAN, Abbot of Bury St. Edmund's, died in August, 1065, and was succeeded by Baldwin, a monk of St. Denis at Paris, who was at that time Prior of Deerhurst, Gloucestershire. He was "gretly expert in crafft off medycyne"; and in most of the annals of the monastery he is called "medicus Aedwardi regis." He restored the sight of his hostile neighbour, Herfastus, Bishop of Hulm (later Thetford and afterwards Norwich) when the latter received an injury to his eyes.

Herman, the Archdeacon (Reg. Rub. Coll. Bur., 330, referred to by Yates in his history of Bury Abbey, p. 99), says that "as the Bishop was riding and conversing with his attendants on some injuries meditated by him against the monastery of St. Edmund, a branch of a tree struck his eyes, and a violent and painful suffusion of blood occasioned immediate blindness, St. Edmund thus avenging himself and punishing the temerity of the invader of his rights. Having long remained entirely blind, without the prospect of relief, the Archdeacon ventured to say to him: 'My Lord Bishop, your endeavours are useless, no collyrium will avail; you should seek the favour of God and St. Edmund. Hasten to Abbot Baldwin that his prayers to God and St. Edmund may provide an efficacious remedy.' This counsel, at first despised, was at length assented to. Herman undertook the embassy, and executed it on the same day, the festival of St. Simon and St. Jude. The Abbot benignantly granted the request; and the enfeebled Bishop came to the

monastery, being graciously received by the Abbot, and admonished by him to reflect, that as offences against God and St. Edmund were diminished, the medicine to be applied would more certainly alleviate his sufferings. They proceeded into the church, where, in the presence of the elder brethren, and certain peers of the realm, etc., the Bishop declares the cause of his misfortune; recites the injuries he had conceived against this holy place; confesses himself culpable; condemns under an anathema his advisers; and binds himself by a vow to reject such counsels. He then advances, with sighs and tears, to the foot of the altar; replaces (surrenders) on it the pastoral staff; prostrates himself before God and St. Edmund; performs his devotions, and receives absolution from the Abbot and brethren. Then having made trial of the Abbot's medicines, and as I saw by the application of cauteries and collyriums, assisted by the prayers of the brethren, in a short time he returned perfectly healed; only a small obscurity remaining in the pupil of one eye as a memorial of his audacity."

These facts are abstracted from a paper in the first volume of the Proceedings of the Bury and West Suffolk Archaeological Institute, by Samuel Tymms in 1848.

In the first of his historical essays in *Feudal England*, Round notices the case and dates it 1076-9. He is not concerned with the eye injury of the unfortunate Bishop but with one Thorold, the Norman Sheriff of Lincolnshire. The result of Baldwin's treatment was that Herfastus renounced his claim to jurisdiction over the Abbey.

Baldwin was a favourite of the Confessor, who granted him, for the monastery, the privilege of a mint; and the Conqueror continued to keep him in favour. During his abbacy the stately church of Bury was begun in stone; the previous structure had been only a wooden erection.

The *Monasticon* tells us something about the differences between Baldwin and Herfastus; it states that Baldwin went to Rome to get an injunction against Herfastus, "who having been elevated 1070 A.D. to the Bishoprick of Elmham, removed the see from that village to the town of Thetford, and in the following year declared his intention of finally establishing it at Bury."

It is idle to speculate on the cause of Herfastus's blindness, but I am inclined to think that he may have had cataract. Baldwin's collyriums may have caused his eyes to smart, and he, rubbing them, may have depressed his cataracts, completely in one eye and partially in the other. It is on these lines that Sir John Bland-Sutton accounts for Tobit's miraculous restoration of sight as recorded in the Apocrypha. In Tobit's case the irritant was the gall of a fish; anything would do so long as it smarted sufficiently. Herfastus died about 1085 and Abbot Baldwin in 1098.