A NEW NEEDLE HOLDER*†

BY

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To take advantage of the principle that the movements of the fingers and hand are more delicate than those of the hand and wrist, a special holder for curved ophthalmic needles has been designed. It has a handle of the type described by Castroviejo but slightly elongated. Instead of straight blades there are projections 6 millimetres long at the ends which make an angle of 110° with the axis of the handle. These are 2 millimetres in diameter and each has two facets on the inner surface arranged at right angles to each other, one sloping downwards and forwards and the other downwards and backwards (Fig. 1). The needle is grasped between the corresponding facets of the terminal projections.

The method of using the instrument is shown in Figs 2 and 3. It will be noted that when a portion of the needle held in one pair of facets is passed through the tissues it is grasped by the other and withdrawn. This results in a smooth pendulum-like action. Moreover there is only a limited action of the wrist instead of the extensive pronation and supination required in the use of most needle holders.

The writer, being right-handed, finds it convenient to have the facets on the toe of the needle holder sloping downwards and towards him; otherwise the

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† The instrument was made by Messrs. C. W. Dixey & Son, of 19, Wigmore Street, London, W.1.
projection where the facets cross over tends to catch on the threads that are being used. When sewing away from him the reverse arrangement is preferable for the same reason.

This instrument is not so convenient for general use as a number of others which are available, nor is it suitable for needles of all sizes and curves. But for fine sewing, e.g. that required for the preplaced corneo-scleral stitches of cataract extractions, or in the closure of the wounds of scleral excision operations, it seems to have some value as an addition to our armamentarium.