VICTIMS OF THE RECENT BLIZZARDS IN THE NORTHWEST ASPHYXIATED BEFORE FREEZING.

Dear Sir:—There is an amount of evidence and a combination of circumstances sufficient to show that the greater number of the several hundreds who lost their lives in the recent great "blizzard" of the Northwest perished from asphyxia and not by freezing. Many of the bodies, when found, were in the position of grasping or clutching at their own necks or throats. In-door witnesses describe the atmosphere as having an appearance of density and darkness, similar to that stated by divers as existing when submerged with their armor in deep water. Many that escaped describe their peril as being from loss of breath or suffocation.

The terrific hurricane force of the wind, loaded with falling snow—the latter being by a fall of temperature whose degree and suddenness has no recorded parallel converted into dry crystals, and thence by the gale ground to a fine dry ice-dust—these conditions produced a state of the atmosphere as unfit for respiration and aeration of the blood as is water for warm-blooded animal life. The extent of the fatality resulting from this storm, also its horrors, will never be fully known. For reasons evident and natural the papers of the region effectually suppress and underrate the actual truth. Your correspondent, while just outside the belt of the storm's fatality, is sufficiently contiguous to obtain information and facts in verification of the views given. The remains of several resident victims have been returned to this locality for interment; persons absent upon business or visiting when overtaken by the storm.

The Signal Service Office reported a falling barometer and severe storm at the same hour upon this memorable day, over an area whose extent far exceeds that of any upon its records. From Montana to Cincinnati, Ohio, and St. Paul, Minn., to St. Louis, Mo., was the storm field, whose centre was stated as near Des Moines, Ia. Here we have a cause for results as exceptional as itself. Yours respectfully,

H. C. MARKHAM, M.D.

Independence, Ia., February 8, 1888.

BOOK REVIEWS.

THE RULES OF ASEPTIC AND ANTISEPTIC SURGERY.

A Practical Treatise for the Use of Students and the General Practitioner. By ARPAD G. GERSTER, M.D., Professor of Surgery at the New York Polyclinic; Visiting Surgeon to the Mount Sinai Hospital and the German Hospital, New York. 8vo, pp. xi, 332, with 248 engravings and 3 chromo-lithographic plates. New York: D. Appleton and Company. 1888. Chicago: W. T. Keener.

"The object of this volume is a systematic, yet practical presentation of the Listerian principal that has revolutionized surgery within the last fifteen years." This object the author has been careful to

keep in view throughout the whole book. The volume is not a treatise on operative surgery—and for this we thank the author—nor is it a collection of rules for the preparation and application of surgical dressings; of such works we have a sufficient quantity. The book may be termed a treatise on operative surgical physiology and pathology, if there be no contradiction in this combination of words. Or, it may be said that the book is a series of illustrated sermons on the text: *The surgeon's act determines the fate of a fresh wound, and its infection and sup-puration are due to his technical faults of omission and commission.* And this text is elaborated in the fullest possible manner, but without unnecessary repetition or verbiage, and without any attempt to prove what are now to be considered self evident propositions in surgical treatment. The book is not written for those that blindly cavil at Listerian principles; that would be indeed labor lost. It is full of instruction, but meagre of controversy.

The primary healing of a fresh wound is now to be looked upon as a matter of course rather than as a curiosity or a piece of "good luck." Surgeons that have accepted and acted upon the great Listerian principle have now reached the solid ground of *asepticism*, which lies a step beyond the equally solid ground of *antisepticism*. And it is since they have established themselves upon the firm basis of *asepticism* that they have seen their scope of work widen into fields into which formerly it was dangerous to step. With this extension of the safe-ground of surgery there has been a fruitful development of operative technique.

We have said this much for the purpose of showing the design and scope of Dr. Gerster's excellent book without copying the table of contents, and without quoting extensively from the pages of the book. And if the reader will broaden his conception of the meaning of the title of the work, until the words "Aseptic and Antiseptic Surgery" imply to him all that they can possibly mean, he will have an idea of the object and scope of the work; but until he sees it he will have but a limited idea of its value. The vast majority of the illustrations are made from photographs, and convey an accurate idea of what they are intended to show.

W. G. E.

NASAL POLYPUS with Neuralgia. Hay Fever, and Asthma in Relation to Ethmoiditis. By EDWARD WOAKES, M.D., Surgeon to the London Throat Hospital, etc. With Illustrations. 8vo, p. xii, 140. Philadelphia: P. Blakiston, Son & Co. 1887. Chicago: W. T. Keener.

This book is the outcome of a series of investigations that the author has been at work upon for several years. Starting from the observation that in some cases of ear disease there was a catarrhal accompaniment in the nose, that the middle turbinated bone frequently became enlarged, and that the swellings gradually put forth from their surfaces reddish granular masses, which in time became larger, he noticed that these superficial granulations showed a tendency to develop into mucous polypi. This may be regarded as the germ upon which Dr.