saw their first Eskimos. Dr. Mathiassen explains that this was because the Eskimos clung to northern latitudes, suitable for dog sledges and their ice hunting, but later the Eskimos spread southward and in the fourteenth century they were attacking Norse settlements, burning Norse houses, after blocking the doors, taking savage vengeance on captives, and plundering the smoking ruins for any valuables after a massacre.

Norse in Greenland were by this time a degenerate, pitiful set of colonists, as archaeologists have shown by finding the skeletons marked by signs of malnutrition and sickness. By the time Columbus arrived in the New World, the Greenland wars were won—by the Eskimos.

Science News Letter, December 4, 1937

MEDICINE

"Aluminum-Rubber-Lung" Less Expensive Than Iron One

A RELATIVELY low-cost "rubber aluminum-lung" for keeping alive patients whose breathing apparatus is paralyzed by infantile paralysis, will shortly be offered commercially. Of Swedish origin, this respirator is intended to perform the same function as more costly "iron lungs" now in use.

Based on principles first worked out by Dr. Bo Sahlin, assistant professor at the Physiological Institute, Lund, Sweden, the new Stille-Scanlon respirator utilizes a plate of aluminum which is made to fit closely the patient's body by rubber fittings. Differences in air pressure within this apparatus raise and lower the patient's breathing muscles, replacing the damaged natural function of the lung action. An advantage of the new respirator is that it covers only the thorax and the abdomen.

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ARTIFICIAL LUNG

MEDICINE

Viruses Do Not Always Cause Disease Symptoms

MOST people think of viruses as the invisible cause of certain diseases. Infantile paralysis, influenza and the common cold, smallpox and various other human ails are virus-caused. Domestic animals are affected by virus-caused diseases such as hoof and mouth disease, and plants are attacked by still other viruses.

Tobacco mosaic is a well-known virus-disease of plants. Viruses can even attack bacteria, the micro-organisms commonly called germs. Bacteriophage, used to fight certain kinds of disease, is a virus that attacks bacteria.

There are viruses, however, which can exist in the body without producing any signs of illness. Besides being so small as to be invisible—no microscope is powerful enough to make them visible—viruses can also be "inapparent."

This adjective is applied by Dr. E. V. Cowdry, professor of cytology at Washington University School of Medicine, in a report to the Scientific Monthly.

Even the dread infantile paralysis virus is inapparent much of the time, Dr. Cowdry points out. It is estimated that many children and at least four-fifths of the adults living in cities have mild, undetected attacks of infantile paralysis which gives them immunity or protection against further attack. Otherwise, during epidemics of infantile paralysis, many more persons would be sick than actually are.

Many of the inapparent viruses, however, are unknown, or known only to scientists working in this particular field. Some of them became known by accident. These viruses produce changes in some of the cells of the body, but the changes are not great enough to cause illness. If tissues containing these inapparent viruses are ground up, dissolved and injected into other animals, and the process repeated through several transfers, the virus may finally become apparent and cause signs of disease.

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ASTRONOMY

Prominent Star Gradually Decreases in Brightness

GAMMA Cassiopeiae, one of the sky's prominent but variable stars, has decreased in brightness in recent months. Dr. C. M. Huffer of Washburn Observatory has informed Harvard College Observatory that this star has changed from magnitude 1.75 on May 7 to 2.46 at the beginning of this month. Members of the American Association of Variable Star Observers confirmed this stellar change and found the most pronounced change occurred in October.

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