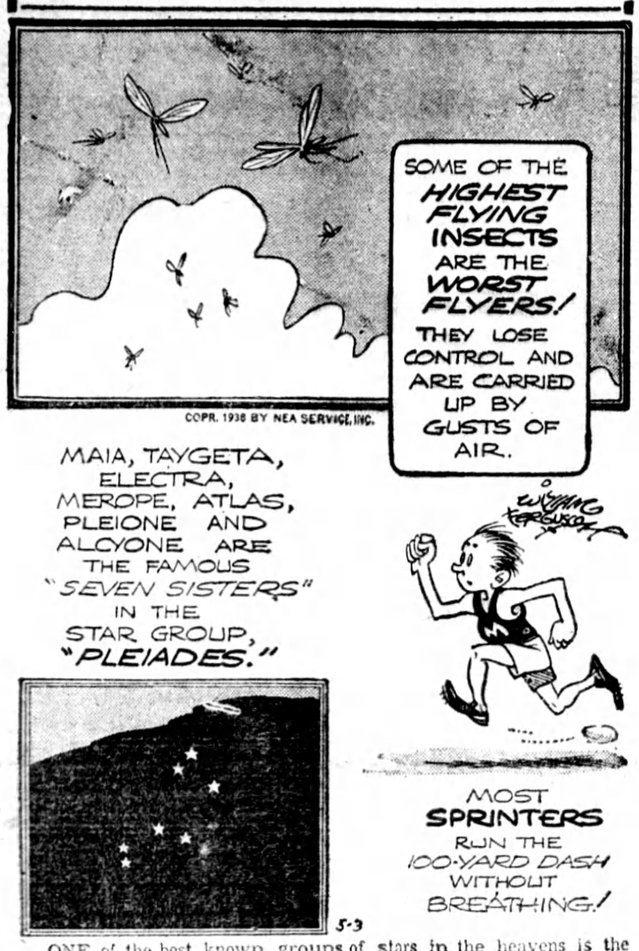
THIS CURIOUS WORLD By William Ferguson



ONE of the best known groups of stars in the heavens is the Pleiades, which frequently is erroneously called the "little dipper." These "Seven Sisters" figured prominently in ancient celebrations of the beginning of spring, since they once marked the sun's place in the heavens as it crossed the equator traveling north.

NEXT: When red hail fell.

OTTAWA REPORTS

That New Regulations Will Tighten Control On Purchase Of Farm Machinery

Farm machinery production and use is being watched anxiously by the Government these days. Ottawa is very conscious of the fact that vital food production may be affected by any miscalculations of the requirement of the farmers in this direction.

In spite of the fact that quotas for manufacture of farm equipment have been very considerably enlarged during recent months, new equipment is still difficult to obtain compared with normal times. It is still necessary to ration a wide variety of items of farm machinery and equipment and to otherwise control the sale of these goods, and the Administrator of Farm Machinery for the Wartime Prices and Trade Board has announced some new regulations which tighten the control over conditions under which new farm machinery is sold.

War material must come first and implement plants both in Canada and the United States are still engaged on war orders. The supply of metal, although improved, is not yet nearly adequate. this respect that arrangements have been made by Mr. Bloom, the Farm Machinery Administrator, with the United States War Production Board for the release of greater supplies of metal for use in making farm machinery.

* * *

The new regulations now announced and included in a general consolidation of the farm machinery rationing order, concern the sales of machinery. One prohibits a dealer from putting to his own use machinery that he has obtained for re-sale to customers, unless he has proper permission from the Board to do so. Another provision is designed to prevent farmers from selling used equipment merely for the purpose of obtaining new. From now on, no application for new equipment will be considered in these cases unless the farmer has previously filed with the Board's representative, a statement describing the used equipment he sold, giving his reasons for selling it, and a description of the new machinery he intends to buy. It is useless for him to try to proceed with his purchase unless he has a notice from the Board's representative that his application for the new equipment will be given consideration.

* * *

Another provision has been made which is designed to prevent farmers, who have already been refused application for new machinery, from repeating their application through relatives. The Board now requires that applications for new machinery must come only from those who have a leasehold or freehold interest in the property on which the new machinery is to be used.

However it is some help to know that repairs for farm equipment are not on the rationed list, and that there are some thirty items of new equipment which are not rationed.

Coal for Poultry Breeders

Two announcements issued recently will be good news to poultry breeders across the country. The Department of Agriculture has announced that additional supplies of anthracite coal will be imported from the United States for the exclusive use of poultry breeders and hatcheries. This will apply to the districts where this fuel is customarily used.

The other announcement comes from the Wartime Prices and Trade Board and places a ceiling on the prices of both soluble and insoluble types of poultry grit. The ceiling prices which went into effect on December 16, affect manufacturers, importers, wholesalers and retailers.

VOICE OF THE PRESS

KNOWS HOW

Dunnville Chronicle would like to know: "Why do people spend money they have not got to buy things they don't need to impress people they don't like?" All we can suggest is the standard woman's reason—because.

—Owen Sound Sun-Times.

—o—

MAKES HIM SQUIRM

Hitler must find it a pain in the neck to read the handwriting on the wall when his back is almost against the same.

—Kitchener Record.

—o—

EACH GOT HIS DESERTS

A Canadian soldier paid £1 for a bottle of whisky in an Edinburgh pub. The Canadian got cold tea instead of whisky, and the pub owner got 30 days. Neither got what he wanted, but what each got was good for him.

—Ottawa Journal.

—o—

FAR BELOW CANINE LEVEL

Detroit police arrested a group of professional dog fight fans. A dog fight promoter is a man several degrees below a dog.

—Detroit Free Press.

—o—

A NIGGER IN THAT WOODPILE

Ask some consumers about coal, and they shout: "For peat's sake don't mention it!"

—Hamilton Spectator.

—o—

WHAT? AGAIN?

Newspapers, like ladies, have to be careful. When there's a letdown their slip shows.

—Ottawa Citizen.

THE WAR · WEEK — Commentary on Current Events

Eisenhower To Direct Western Assault Into Heart of Germany

A three-front land offensive to be launched simultaneously against Germany from Russia, from Italy and from Britain across the Channel, with Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower in supreme command of the Anglo-American invasion army, was disclosed by President Roosevelt in his Christmas Day radiocast to the nation and to the armed forces in every theater of the globe, writes a correspondent of The Christian Science Monitor.

The Cairo and Teheran, Iran, conferences with Marshal Joseph Stalin, Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek and Prime Minister Winston Churchill brought the President announced, agreement "on every point ocncerned with the launching of a gigantic attack upon Germany."

Mr. Roosevelt revealed the broad pattern of the climatic operations now in the making.

Campaign High Lights

He evidently felt it would be no help to the enemy to make known:

That the Russian Army will continue its stern offensives on Germany's Eastern Front.

That the Allied armies in Italy and Africa will bring relentless pressure on Germany from the south.

And that the encirclement will be complete as great American and British forces attack from other points of the compass.

The President explained that General Eisenhower was selected to lead the combined attack from these other points because "his performances in Africa, Sicily and Italy have been brilliant" and because "he knows by practical and successful experience the way to co-ordinate air, sea, and land power."

Shifts In Commanders

London revealed that General Eisenhower's assistant will be Gen. Sir Bernard L. Montgomery, the famed commander of Britain's Eighth Army, that Gen. Sir Henry Maitland Wilson will succeed Gen. Eisenhower in the Mediterranean with an American general assisting him, and that Gen. Sir Harold Alexander will command the Allied forces in Italy.

A British officer, to be announced by Prime Minister Churchill, will succeed General Eisenhower in the Mediterranean and both the new commanders will have American and British subordinate commanders.

The choice of an American for the Channel operation was dictated by the proportion of the burden to be borne there by American forces. The Mediterranean is to become largely a British undertaking. British troops have from the beginning carried most of the load and now provide nearly three fourths of the troops operating in Italy.

American forces entered that area originally on the assumption that the French in Africa would resist Americans less tenaciously than they would resist the British. French Africa now being in the war as an ally, that factor no longer governs. America's land weight in Europe therefore shifts back to England as a base and an American commander becomes logical for that area.

Magnitude of Problem

Indicating the gathering striking force now available in Britain and the powerful reserves which will be ready to follow up the coming cross-Channel invasion, as well as other operations, Mr. Roosevelt said "there are now 3,800,000 men in the American armed forces serving overseas and that by July this number will rise to over 5,000,000.

But with the settling upon General Eisenhower for the invasion command comes new indications of the magnitude of his problem. The time cannot be very far in the distance. To take the fullest advantage of the Russian winter offensive it must come in the very early spring—before the spring thaws in Russia, or not much after the beginning of the thaw. The Germans must not be allowed time to move forces from the Eastern to the Western Fronts.

Element of Haste

That writes an element of urgent haste into the preinvasion bombing schedule. Not only must maximum damage be done to German war industry during the next two or three months, but the invasion coast itself must be softened and the primary coast defenses must be reduced to the minimum possible effectiveness.

The President frankly warned that the biggest and costliest battles are still to be fought, and he said of the planned invasion, though its success was certain, its cost would be high and the time might be long.

The Book Shelf

Forges of Freedom

By Franklin Davey McDowell

Like a tapestry come to life this novel of fourteenth century England presents a vivid panorama of life in that romantic and turbulent age when the roads of England were the meeting-place of knights and minstrels, merchants and pedlars, outlaws and conspirators.

Mr. McDowell re-creates brilliantly the medieval scene and the pattern of life in England when, after three hundred years of Norman occupation, Englishmen from every walk of life drew their swords or forged them to fight for freedom.

There are many dramatic meetings in this novel, pictured in all the pageantry of the period: the meeting of John of Gaunt and the "Grossers"; the march on London when Watt Tyler met the King and his followers with Sir John de Redeware, Lord William de Rose and their partisans.

Forges of Freedom tells the story of that critical period of

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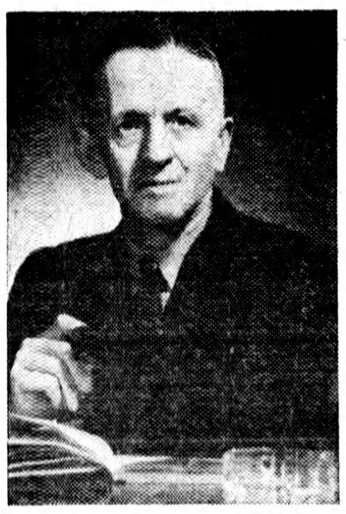

David Franklin McDowell

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Anglo-Saxon political development when the English first appeared as a nation.

Mr. McDowell is the author of The Champlain Road, an historical romance of Ancient Huronia, in Ontario's Georgian Bay District, which won the Governor-General's Award for Fiction in 1939.

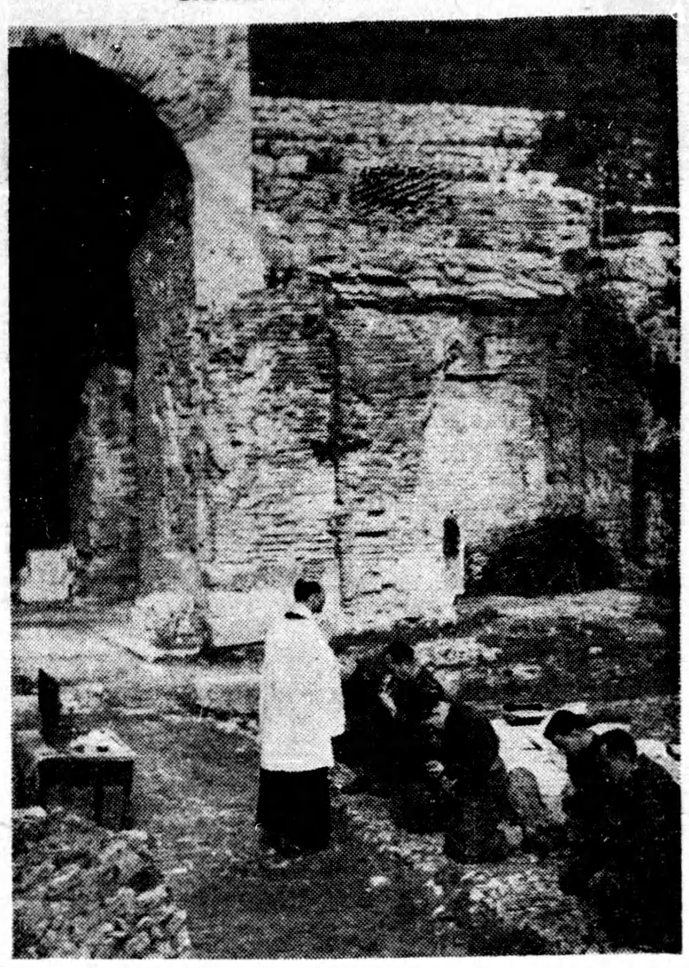
Identified for many years with the Canadian National Railways as Publicity Representative for the Central Region, Mr. McDowell is one of the many fiction writers trained by practical journalism. Widely known among press and magazine writers, his early years were spent as a reporter and feature writer, and he worked for a period in the United Kingdom.

Forges of Freedom . . . By Franklin Davey McDowell . . . The Macmillan Company . . . . Price $3.50.

Poor Fido

Britain has saved 460 thousand tons of shipping space in a year by importing "telescoped" meat. This is meat from which all bones have been removed.

CANADIANS IN SICILY



These ancient ruins in Sicily, crumbling evidence of a former civilization, was the setting for this Church of England communion being given here to a group of Canadians by Major Serson Clarke, of Ottawa, after a recent church service. (Canadian Army Overseas Photo).

Some Kind Words For Lowly Skunk

The lowly skunk has been given a lot of most undeserved publicity, according to a man who claims to know much about these little animals, says The Trenton Courier Advocate. This man tells us that when a skunk is trapped, the other skunks will bring him a bed to lie on. Further than that, they will bring him food. He says he can prove this. If what this man says is true, and we are not doubting him a bit, name any other animal, wild or tame, that is so considerate of its own at a time like that.

Newfoundlanders Doing Full Share

Out of a male population in Newfoundland of 40,000 between the ages of 20 and 40, more than a quarter have volunteered to serve abroad. Numbers of these men are with Newfoundland Artillery Regiments of the United Kingdom forces; with the Royal Navy, the Royal Air Force, the Merchant Marine and the Forestry Unit. Many have enlisted in the Canadian armed forces. In this war as in the former world struggle, the Newfoundlanders are doing their full share of the fighting.

Still Gets Around On High-Wheeler

From Regina comes a picture of a man in his seventies riding a high-wheel bicycle, relates the Woodstock Sentinel-Review. This machine, more than half a century old, is used today just as the ordinary bicycle or automobile—for the purpose of "getting around." What a difference in mechanism and in time and events between that high-wheeler and the latest tank.

The owner of the high-wheeler is R. J. King, a Regina contractor. He says he "learned to get on the thing (quite a chore) back in Wingham, Ontario, 50 years ago." Mr. King said that he "used to go to work on it back in Ontario—Went a-courtin' on it, too."

Not without interest, in the light of the story and background of this high-wheeler, is the fact that it was built in Coventry, England. The firm which built it was still making bicycles when the war broke out. Probably the firm's building was blown to bits in the infamous Coventry blitz.

The machine's front wheel is about 4½ feet high. Tires are solid rubber. "Sometimes," says Mr. King, "if you lose your balance, she'll throw you like a bucking broncho." With no attempt at lightness, it should be said that such news as this helps all to keep their balance in a troubled world.

REG'LAR FELLERS—The Human Transport

By GENE BYRNES