THE MAKING OF THE 'MARITIMES'

The Cod Fisheries

The History of an International Economy. By Harold A. Innis. (The Relations of Canada and the United States: a Series of Studies prepared under the direction of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Division of Economics and History.) Pp. xx+520. (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press; Toronto: The Ryerson Press; London: Oxford University Press, 1940.) 21s. 6d.

THIS is an important book (as well as a large one) about the great fisheries of the maritime provinces of North America, including New England, tracing their history from the days of Cabot's discovery of Newfoundland to the recent inglorious submission of that island to administration by British civil servants.

The book is one of a series designed to promote the mutual understanding of Canada and the United States. It is also introduced as a challenge to the imagination and insight of the reader, which it undoubtedly is, and Canadian and American students who master it may well have a fellow-feeling based on survival of the same ordeal, for it is uncommonly hard reading.

Yet the book is saved by its very pedestrianism. It is a long and tedious tale of petty greed and sectional interests, in which it is usually the reader who has to contribute the thought that these men were venturing their all, or their lives, on arduous fishing in comfortless places, and in far voyaging with the catch to West Indies and Mediterranean; but there is a fascination in the record of commercial facts which passes across the pages with the precision and inevitability of the tape-machine: "Colonial shipping grew in importance with colonial trade. In 1763 St. John's shipped fish totalling 56,365 quintals. Of this, vessels from Philadelphia carried 2,967 quintals"; etc.; or, from a footnote: "Planters increased

from 346 men in 1736 to 690 in 1747, and to 1,250 in 1764; servants from 3,727", etc.

There is another and greater virtue in the book, in that it does attempt to make sense of all this, to show the historical trends that have resulted in the present state of affairs in the Maritimes. Despite the long record of apparently unimportant detail, the author does establish his right to draw sweeping and important conclusions. Having traced the failure of the chartered company system, then the dominance of the English West Country Merchant Adventurers, whose power was destroyed by the multitude of small settlers, and the rise of their commerce, essentially a maritime decentralized economy, he shows how this in its turn has fallen.

"The transition from dependence on a maritime economy to dependence on a continental economy has been slow, painful, and disastrous. The tremendous initiative which characterised commercialism based on the fishing industry could be measured in the collapse of West Country company control over trade and the fishery, in the history of Newfoundland and New England, the defeat of France and the breakdown of the colonial system, the disappearance of the Navigation Acts, and even the rise of responsible government and the establishment of Confederation. This is an initiative which cannot be suddenly replaced. The effects of the tragedy of the replacement of commercialism by capitalism call for a long period of expensive adjustment and restoration, and this cannot take place without policies which foster the revival of initiative under responsible governments."

Those are Prof. Innis's closing words. As English I found the passage difficult, but unless I am much mistaken it is history of the most useful kind—that understands the past in order to forgive the present, and prepare for the future.

MICHAEL GRAHAM.

ANIMALS AND PLANTS AT HOME

The Open Book of Wild Life

An Introduction to Nature Study. By Richard Morse. Pp. 240+48 plates. (London: Adam and Charles Black, Ltd., 1941.) 8s. 6d. net.

MR. MORSE's book is meant primarily for younger readers, but it is not likely that many adults will begin reading it without being caught

by its irresistible charm—the charm of the wild life of the British countryside and the charm of the writer's style. The book is based on sound scientific principles, and compresses an enormous amount of knowledge in a comparatively small compass. In fact, everybody can learn something from what one can only describe as a delightful book. It is not a text-book. It comprises the