

Baiting the Hook by the Book

For the edification of the millions of men (and women) who spend their weekends hunched over bodies of water intent on sport SR continues its Weekend Fun Series with a survey of current literature on fishing. The author, teaches biology at Princeton.

By John Tyler Bonner

WITH a few notable exceptions the prime characteristic of a book on the art of fishing is bad writing. But what surprises me most is that it makes absolutely no difference. The point is that if one is uninterested or even dislikes fishing then there is no possibility of opening a fishing book; however, if one is a pathologically ardent fisherman, as most fishermen are, then it is of no importance how the book is written as long as the author sticks to the subject. If it is a time of year (or even a time of day) when one cannot fish the incurable fisherman will spend hours with a fishing book on his lap, avidly taking in the details of how to make a new knot, or what was the record rainbow trout caught in Idaho last year. In these prosaic facts he sees beautiful babbling streams, deep clear lakes, blue oceans, all stiff with every conceivable kind of fish with insatiable appetites for his fly or spoon.

I now realize that books of fishing are like books of pornography—there are always some people to whom the subject matter is of such great interest that the quality of the prose passes by unnoticed. I have been reliably informed by an English friend that the same principle applies in England to books on cricket.

To come to grips now with the twenty books that have been written during this past year or so on fishing I have classified them in rough categories and stacked them on my desk in appropriate piles. For some preliminary statistics on trends in fishing books there are three about fishing in general, seven about fresh-water fishing, four on salt-water fishing, three on spinning, and finally two that are deliberately intended to be amusing.

Of the general books Raymond R. Camp's *"The Collier's Book of Hunting and Fishing"* (A. S. Barnes, \$3.95) is an easy-going, professional job in which each chapter discusses the bag-

ging of some important game animal in the United States. Larry Koller has written four books for the Bobbs-Merrill outdoor series, all of which are undeniably stimulating to those very special fisherman hormones. They are small books consisting primarily of illustrations. *"The Complete Book of Fishing"* (Bobbs-Merrill, \$2.75) tells you where to go and what to fish for every season of the year. The total program if followed out would be a bit expensive, but you can enjoy this book the way you might enjoy an issue of *Life* magazine. The only unconvincing bit is a picture of low-water trout fishing in August where a fisherman is bundled up in a windbreaker and is surrounded by trees whose leaves have not yet emerged.

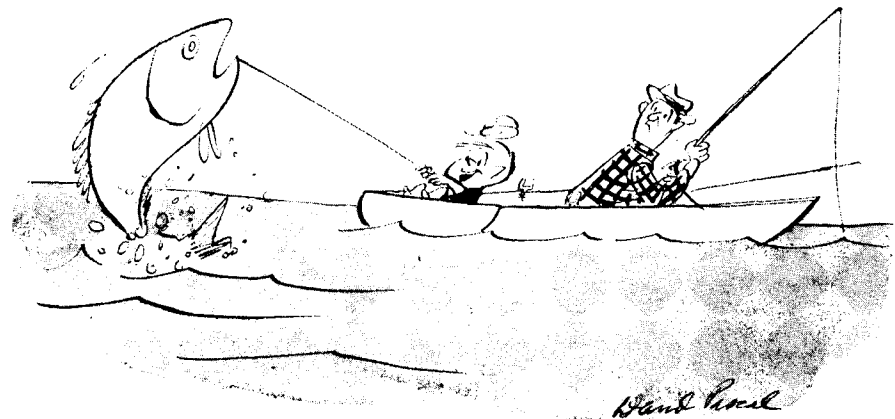
The masterpiece is Larry Koller's *"The Complete Book of Fishing Tackle"* (Bobbs-Merrill, \$2.75). Apparently Mr. Koller had the enviable job of trying out tons of every different kind of tackle for every different kind of fishing and has selected what he thinks is best and from this made a small, well-illustrated catalogue. The beauty of this book is that it plays on two major human instincts: the fishing instinct and the catalogue-reading instinct. One can spend hours with this slim volume; it is like reading an edited Sears Roebuck catalogue. Previously my sole outlet for this urge had been an outdated Hardy catalogue, and Koller's book may be favorably compared to that great volume of British literature.

TO turn now to fresh-water fishing: the complete Larry Koller has *"The Complete Book of Fresh-Water Fishing"*

(Bobbs-Merrill, \$2.75), which is very brief but again well illustrated and undeniably contains much valuable information. I think, however, the best books on fresh-water fishing are by A. J. McClane, who is the fishing editor of *Field & Stream*. His *"The American Angler"* (Henry Holt, \$5) is a most useful book on how and where to go for different kinds of fish but his *"The Practical Fly Fisherman"* (Henry Holt, \$5.95) is really an exceptionally comprehensive volume on all the problems encountered in the difficult art of fly fishing. It would be helpful to beginners as well as old hands. H. S. Blaisdell's *"Tricks That Take Fish"* (Henry Holt, \$3.95) is a rather unsystematic book full of helpful hints, many of which are undeniably clever, but on the whole I would say this book is not so well suited to the novice (or what fishing books usually refer to as "the tyro").

One of the books on fresh-water fishing is in a series on British sports—past and present, *"Fishing,"* by Bernard Venables (British Book Centre, \$3.50). For the fly fisherman especially this book has many interesting historical facts but, alas, its having been written in England does not make the prose any better than its American counterparts. The meaty information is there but finding it is like walking over a rocky stream in slippery rubber boots. The one fine exception to the writing problem is Clark C. Van Fleet's *"Steelhead to a Fly"* (Little, Brown, \$4), which is really exceptionally delightful to read. I do not mean to say that there is any chance that a man who hates fishing will like it, but those who do will enjoy it hugely.

For salt water Larry Koller again has done a satisfactory job with his *"The Complete Book of Salt Water Fishing"* (Bobbs-Merrill, \$2.75) and there are two very good books by Henry Lyman: one on *"Bluefishing"* (A. S. Barnes, \$1.75) and one written in collaboration with Frank Woolner (Continued on page 30)



—By David Pascal, from "You've Got Me on the Hook" (Dodd, Mead).

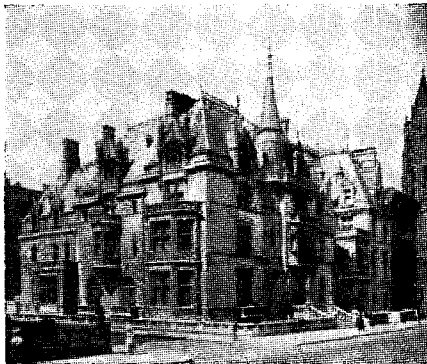
"I dropped one of my lines in by accident, Dad . . ."

Our Man-Made Environments

"American Skyline: The Growth and Form of Our Cities and Towns," by Christopher Tunnard and Henry Hope Reed (Houghton Mifflin, 302 pp. \$5), is both an historical survey and a plan for future development. It is reviewed below by Walter Creese, formerly chairman of the Louisville Planning and Zoning Commission, who is now in England on a Fulbright fellowship for research in architecture and planning.

By Walter Creese

THOSE who have come to look toward the Yale Graduate Program in Planning (of which Christopher Tunnard is the director) as a rich source of fresh thought on city and town development will not be disappointed by his new book, "American



America's first private palace, the W. K. Vanderbilt mansion, Fifth Ave., New York, announced the American Renaissance Style.

Skyline." It is a highly skilful essay unfolding one historic tendril after another. The message is sustained with only the most pertinent facts and the most revealing quotations. The search has turned up many aspects of town life almost forgotten now but full of import for the way we live. One of them is the surprisingly early reluctance of people to congregate for long in villages. Albert Gallatin, Secretary of the Treasury under Jefferson, was already explaining to Alexis de Tocquville in 1831 that "we have no villages, that is to say centers peopled by farmers." Even earlier the General Assembly of Virginia, William Penn, and Increase Mather were

complaining bitterly about this "decentralizing" tendency because of the threat it offered to the ideals they hoped to carry on to posterity through close community organization.

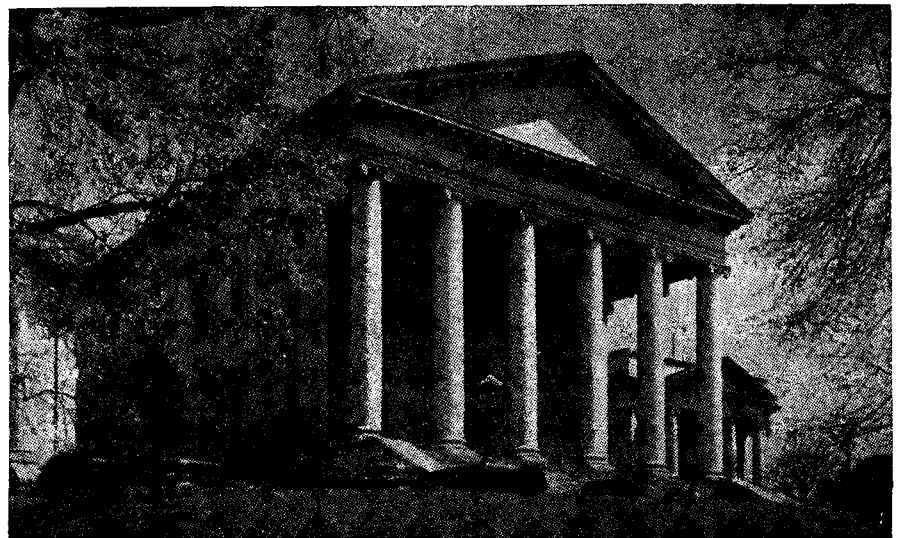
This American individualism, which was to prove both a developing and a disruptive force, was another reason why the English system of long-term land leases could not last here. Only Baltimore still contains survivals of the practice often used in England to harmonize land use and the appearance of buildings. On the other hand, the quick sale and turnover of freehold land seem to have encouraged the universal adoption of systematic right-angled streets. This also accounts in large part for the lack of open green spaces within the blocks thus created. All this too raw and rapid growth is implicit in Whittier's little ditty, quoted in the text:

Behind the squaw's light birch canoe,
The steamer rocks and raves;
And city lots are staked for sale
Above old Indian graves

The temptation for the reader is to linger among these native curiosities and to muse further on the great variety of utopian colonies, on the rise of the "People's Palaces" or hotels, on the boardinghouse and the three-decker, on the factory town and the ghost town, on the elevated railway and filled land, on Henry George's single tax and the Florida Boom.

However, this volume has avoided the pitfalls of episodic color as successfully as the somber statistical chart. Other books have contained similarly intriguing (if not as judiciously chosen) items without drawing the serious conclusions from them which make this volume so substantial. The four most significant problems raised are in the nature of paradoxes. Four areas in our pattern of historical growth are indicated where tradition has cut back upon itself. Professor Tunnard and his collaborator, Henry Hope Reed, feel that if these problems can be sufficiently illuminated we may come to cope with them in good time.

THE FIRST problem highlighted is that of the regional city. The authors would look for an "instrument of government" which would make possible the "Higher Provincialism" of the philosopher Josiah Royce. "Just as Royce thought the province could save the individual in the early 1900s," they say, "so today the Regional City can encourage individual development and social cooperation—if it is once recognized as the new unit of society and national life." The great transportation lines and the big industries which have fostered the huge metropolitan centers have progressed through cooperation and they believe a similar spirit, applied to metropolitan area management, could do as well. For this reviewer there is much in favor of this conception. It might reduce the friction excited by the annexation efforts which seem to be the last resort for the postwar administrative expansion of central cities. Since the United States, unlike most European countries, does not have a national planning office, this would give some further hope for a more amicable rela-



—Illustrations from "American Skyline."

State Capitol, Richmond, Va., the first monumental building in the United States, was designed by Thomas Jefferson.