

character are those of the collection itself. One notable feature of the collection has been the regular changing of groups of exhibits, possible by establishment of a reserve of paintings, and by occasional drafts upon those which hung in the Phillips's own house, in itself a collection of superb quality. Nor did Duncan Phillips's sense of public obligation end with the collection and all the activities it entailed. He was a trustee of the National Gallery, Washington and of the Museum of Modern Art in New York, where his wisdom, integrity, and modesty were greatly valued. But what may be called his extra-curricular influence was remarkable in other ways. He had many friends who held him in affectionate esteem, whose interests he could match with his own (he was even a base-ball fan), and in his house could be met leading figures in almost every walk of life, on whom his knowledge and enthusiasm had full impact. As a Chief Justice of the Supreme Court once said to me, 'To dine with Duncan Phillips is to learn what the arts are, and what they can do for us.'

W. G. CONSTABLE

Letters

The Mérode Mousetrap

SIR, Reluctant as I am further to engorge your *Corpus Mouse-
traporum*, your readers may be interested in yet another depiction of a trap since it closely resembles the object shown in your Fig. 22, March 1966, which is described as a carpenter's plane. The trap, helpfully accompanied by a hungry mouse, forms part of the signature of the 'Master Na.Dat.', appearing on engravings dating from the first two decades of the sixteenth century. In view of the similarity between the detail from the Mérode Altar, the device of the 'Master Na.Dat', and the function of the object shown in Figs.24-5, one is forced, with apologies to Shaw, to the conclusion that mice trapped 'in Spain, are mainly on the plane' (detail, Fig.65.)

COLIN EISLER

New York University,
Institute of Fine Arts.

P.S. for 'Master Na.Dat', see HIND: *Early Italian Engraving*, v, Cat. Part II, p.265. Although Hind views the engraver as Bolognese, it seems more likely that HEINEKEN (*Idee générale d'une collection d'estampes* [1771], p.487) was correct in ascribing a northern European origin to the print-maker, whose French associations have been noted in an article by KURT RATHE: 'Le maître à la Souricière', *Mitt. der Gesell. f. vervielfalt. Kunst* [1931], pp.27-9.

SIR, At the end of his article, 'The Mystery of the Mérode Mousetrap' (THE BURLINGTON MAGAZINE, March 1966, pp.126-33), Professor Irving Zupnick thanks me for my help. This help, I must say, consisted of nothing more than answering a question on the phone: What writers, before 1945, had spoken of the implement on Joseph's work-bench as a mousetrap? Had Professor Zupnick also told me of his doubts concerning the nature of this object and of his proposed alternative solution - that the device is a carpenter's plane (though he writes: 'Admittedly, if it is a plane, it is unlike any known example') - I would have shown him the reproduction of an engraving by the north Italian artist whose emblem is an unmistakable mousetrap and resembles the object in the Mérode picture. This reproduction (detail, Fig.65) was given to me by my colleague, Julius Held, at the time my article

was published. I believe that Professor Zupnick will be able to find more mousetraps of the same type if he will devote himself to the search.

MEYER SCHAPIRO

The Literature of Art

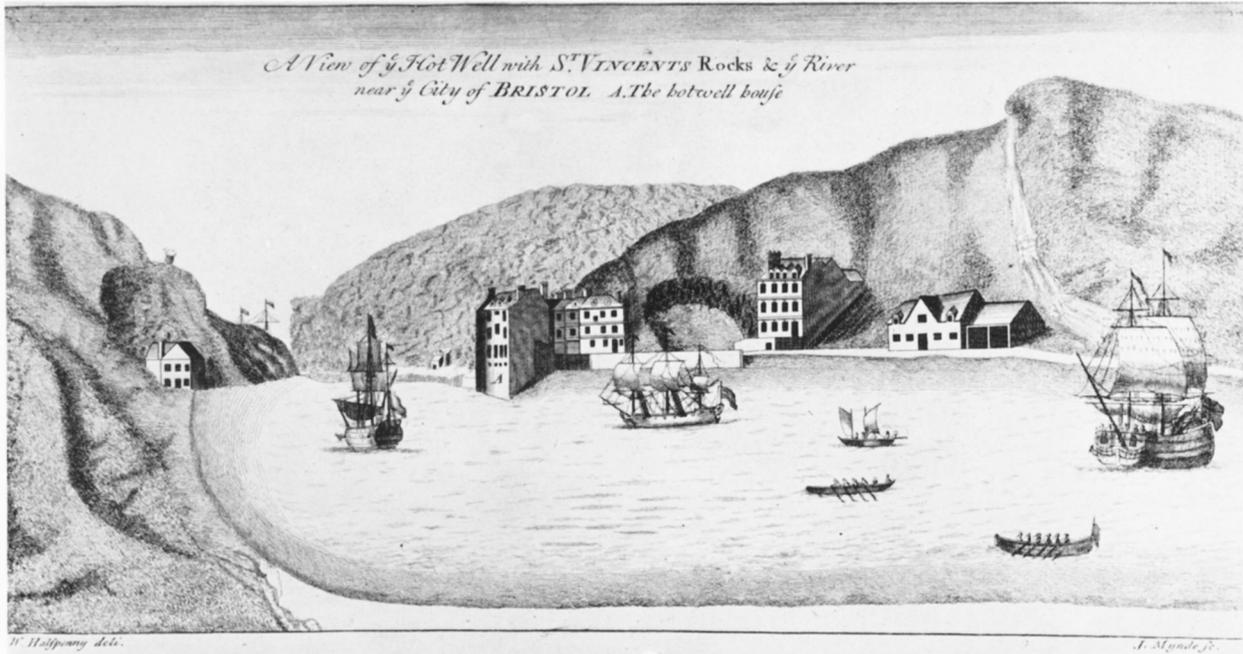
*Filarete's Treatise**

BY PETER MURRAY

'. . . and because he enjoyed writing, while these buildings were in progress he wrote a book in three parts . . . The whole work is divided into 24 Books and illustrated throughout by drawings of his own. There are a few good things to be found in it, but it is nevertheless for the most part ridiculous and so crazy that it would be hard to find one more stupid. It was dedicated by him in 1464 to the magnificent Piero di Cosimo de' Medici and is now in the possession of the Illustrious Lord Duke Cosimo. Since he gave himself so much trouble he might well have preserved the memory of the men of those days and of their works, so that one could have praised him for that, but in truth he made hardly any mention of them, and when he did it is all scattered without any order throughout the book . . .' This somewhat trenchant review was written by Vasari for his 1568 edition: his 1550 edition makes no mention of the treatise and he had no doubt hoped for more information on fifteenth-century art and artists than he actually found when he read the manuscript in the Medici library. Nevertheless, it has been the general judgement ever since, and is likely to remain so. We are indebted to Professor Spencer, of Oberlin, for what must have been a great deal of hard work in making available the full text of the Medici MS. as well as a full translation, but this large and grand edition* prompts some reflections on the editing of art-historical texts in general and this one in particular. This is admittedly a difficult problem, since it would seem to be self-evident that all primary sources of this nature - *i.e.* all texts written by practising artists on their own work or that of their contemporaries - ought to be printed in full, and, if possible, in facsimile, as Professor Spencer has done. In fact, this edition supplies some grounds for believing that the problem is by no means so easily solved. It seems a reproach to art-historical studies that we should have had to wait until 1965 for a complete edition of a manuscript that was brought to our notice by Vasari himself, but, of course, it is the case that other (and far more interesting) sources still await an editor. Vasari's own complaint that the material was so disordered, and so often ridiculous, is a just criticism and has no doubt deterred would-be editors. That it was not the spite and annoyance of a rival - as it has often been thought to be - is made clear by Professor Spencer's translation. Here is a passage at random (Vol.I, p.116): 'I like this, but tell me what will this pavement be made of that it will be beautiful.'

'It will be made of colored glass similar to mosaic. We will also make the corner of a glass that looks like jasper and of many other things. There will also be [a kind of] glass above the seat that will appear beautiful there. The pieces will be flat. Within [them] figures, animals, and various things will be seen carved in such a way that it will be a noble thing to see.'

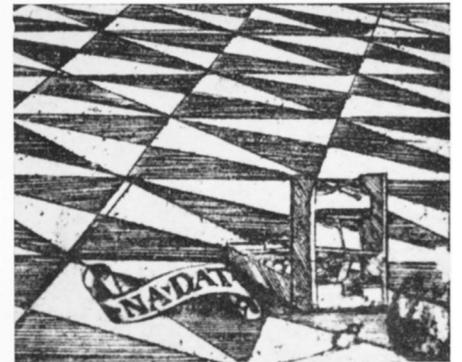
**Filarete's Treatise on Architecture*. Translated with an introduction by John R. Spencer. Vol.I: The Text. xxxviii+339. pp.+22 figs. Vol.II. The Facsimile. 401 pp. New Haven and London (Yale University Press: *Yale Publications in the History of Art*, 16), £21 10s.



63. The Avon Gorge above St Vincent's Rocks, Bristol. Engraving by J. Mynde after William Halfpenny. Published c.1731.



64. Delftware Plate, showing the Avon Gorge above St Vincent's Rocks, Bristol, by Joseph Flower. Signed with monogram and dated 1741/2. Diameter, 22.9 cm. (City Art Gallery, Bristol.)



65. Detail from engraving by the 'Master Na. Dat' (early sixteenth century, North Italian or North European), showing the emblem of the Mousetrap.



66. Reverse of plate illustrated in Fig.64.