

*Joaquin Sorolla***J**OAQUIN SOROLLA AND
SPANISH PAINTING OF TO-DAY.
BY LEONARD WILLIAMS.

THE history of modern Spanish painting has yet to be written. The task, one cannot doubt, will prove both onerous and fascinating, for hardly any nation has undergone, within about a hundred years, so radical an artistic change in all directions.

To assert that the art of a country is created because that country calls for its creation, is merely to repeat a truism. The painter, even when he most believes himself to be obeying the single impulse of his personal ambition, is really dominated, if his work has any lasting value, by another and more subtle impulse proceeding from his inmost soul. He is just as much the servant of his country as is the soldier or the justice, the parson or the schoolmaster; for even if on the surface his work is executed for himself—his pocket, or his fame, or both together—yet underneath the surface is it not executed for the great community of which he is a member?

Another yet an always useful truism asseverates that the kind of art demanded of her sons by any

civilised country will be in absolute concord with the needs and characteristics of the national life.

Nevertheless, the demand a country makes for art is not continuous but recurring, and national needs and energies possess, volcano-like, their periods and crises of composure or upheaval. In this respect the situation of both art and letters is identical. Both form the atmosphere enveloping the mountain-top. Now Matthew Arnold has said that in order to produce a great writer two powers must concur, the power of the man and the power of the moment; the power of the first not being enough without the power of the second. "Moment," then, being interchangeable with "upheaval," and "writer" with "artist," it would be better, perhaps, though less euphonious, to state that every moment that has the power produces of necessity the artist that has the power also. Such moments, as a rule, are operative in one land alone, but now and then are almost universal. One instance is more salient than any other. The same upheaval which transfigured France inspired the poets and the painters of the greater part of Europe. In that immense example, the spark of wondrous fellow-feeling enkindled by the



"AT SEA"

FROM THE OIL-PAINTING BY JOAQUIN SOROLLA