

Studio-Talk

STUDIO-TALK

(From Our Own Correspondents.)

LONDON.—The attitude of the State towards art in this country has never erred on the side of generosity, and is in marked contrast to the friendly encouragement which the arts in general receive from the governments of Continental nations. But in spite of this frigid indifference very few people thought when the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced his intention to levy a tax on entertainments that art exhibitions were to be put on the same footing as the so-called "picture palaces," football matches, and other amusements of the popular kind, and called upon to contribute revenue to the State. Naturally the proposal excited strong opposition on the part of the various bodies affected, but unfortunately the vigorous protest organised by the Council of the Imperial Arts League, and supported by the Presidents of all the leading academies and societies, failed to make

an impression on the Chancellor. When the Act for the early closing of shops came into force some two or three years ago, art exhibitions were held to be subject to its provisions, and certainly there is a good deal more to be said for putting them in the category of "shops" than for grouping them with kinemas and boxing bouts, since the most important object for which an art exhibition is held is to effect a sale of the works exhibited. Of all professions art has suffered most by the war, and recognition of this fact should have secured the exemption demanded by its representatives, especially as the amount of revenue which will flow to the Exchequer from art exhibitions is likely to be very small and indeed insignificant as compared with that yielded by the popular resorts.

The Spring Exhibition of the International Society of Sculptors, Painters, and Gravers now being held at the Grosvenor Gallery is through force of circumstances almost entirely national, like

the other exhibitions of the society since the outbreak of war, the only foreign artist represented, apart from two with Japanese names, being a Belgian painter, M. Leon de Smet. At the Spring exhibition of last year a series of delightful pastels by that doyen of Belgian landscape painters, Emile Claus, added materially to the interest of the show, but there is nothing of his in the current display. If in this assemblage of paintings, drawings, and prints—the sculpture, in spite of the prominence given to plastic art in the Society's title, consists of only about half a dozen items—it is difficult to single out any work as of superlative importance, there is yet much that does credit to the reputation which the Society enjoys. Portraits such as Mr. A. McEvoy's *Hon. Mrs. Cecil Baring*, Mr. John Lavery's *Lady Ursula Grosvenor*, Mr. Gerald Kelly's *Lady Evelyn Farquhar*, Mr. William Nicholson's *Symons Jeune, Esq.*, and *Col. Stuart-Wortley*, Mr. Charles Shannon's *Lady in a Fur Coat*, and Mr. William Strang's *Cynthia King Farlow*, each different from the rest in its technical methods, lift this exhibition far above the commonplace. Mr. Nicholson's *The Hundred Jugs* is a veritable tour



"BETSY, DAUGHTER OF BARON PROFUMO."
(Royal Academy)

BY RALPH PEACOCK