gination, because "if there is an imaginative nation in the song among the true "ballads of the people." world, it is the English nation:"-"I do believe, from what I see have governed greatly, and every race they govern hates around me, not merely in this room, but throughout the country generally, that there is a feeling which will not be satisfied in the works of modern art, which does aim at the production of the highest style of imaginative creation; and I cannot doubt that my countrymen will succeed in these efforts. I rely on the race to which they belong. I rely on the fact that there never has been a limit to the increasing excellence of English achievement, when a fair and just opportunity was offered to it; and therefore I do look forward to a period, of which, I think, we have many symptoms and encouraging circumstances about us, when imaginative art will be characteristic of the English school, as well as that sense of humour and that exquisite feeling of nature and intellectual delineation of portraiture to which I have before referred." This, continued the Premier, is the "nation which has produced the greatest number of poets, the greatest number of illustrious poets," and therefore it must be imaginative; and this is the greatest nation, and "will, therefore, unconsciously, yearn after an ideal in art as high as the position itself occupies" in the world.

That is really most delicate flattery, and we do not wonder that the guests at the Academy Dinner felt the delight which comes of a pleasing surprise. To be told in a year in which Mr. Frith, with his sermonising realism, attracts the largest crowds, that the English are imaginative; to hear that their position in the world is of itself alike evidence and root of imaginative excellence; to be reminded, as it were, of their wealth as testimony to their intellect; and then to have a grave argument adduced in proof that the flattery was well founded, -this, for well-dined men, belonging to a race which, though strong enough to be careless of censure, is not strong enough to reject praise, must have been delicious enjoyment, enjoyment enhanced, if the cynics are right, by the entire absence of truthfulness in the praise. The very facts are untrue. So far from position, national grandeur, empire, developing that imagination which produces success in art, the Roman, whose position was most like our own, failed only in art, and Italians only won their glory in that department of mental effort when Italy was divided into petty States and crushed by petty tyrannies. The Fleming, who conquered nothing; the Dutchman, who only conquered the sea; the Italian, who had no empire save in a past remembrance, no freedom save in thought, no position save that of a petted vassal,—these are the men who in art, in architecture, in sculpture, in painting, have stirred the admiration of mankind; and in music, Lord Beaconsfield himself claims all glory in conception, as well as execution, for the Hebrew, who was till to-day a slave. While Jewish composers charmed mankind, they had scarcely the rights of men. What has Art received from China, or was it the inhabitant of a petty State who told his porters that if they broke the work of Phidias he would make them mend it? Was Phidias a Roman, or Raphael loaded with the "responsibilities" of empire? Lord Beaconsfield says the English have produced the greatest number of illustrious poets. Have they? The number of the English and the duration of the national life being taken into the account, have they so far overpassed Greece in the number of the poets who have lived and sweetened life for the poetic of mankind? Have they even so greatly exceeded the number of the poets whom Judea, a land not bigger than Wales, with a population of scarcely a million, produced, to express for ever the highest religious aspirations? Has Lord Beaconsfield forgotten Zion, or does he, perchance, not reckon Job and David, Isaiah and Ezekiel, among the "illustrious poets" of mankind? That England has produced great poets is true, but if there is one fact more certain about her history than another, it is that the English are not an imaginative people, but a most practical one, unable to look forward into futurity, or sympathise with lives other than their own, or understand ideas not developed in themselves, and that therefore they have succeeded. In politics they have been the people of compromise,—the people, that is, who have subordinated imagination to common-sense. architecture they have been great once, but ever since they were few and little they have been the engineers of the comfortable, have risen by degrees to the height of railway stations, and though unable to devise a beautiful street, have made scientific cloace institutions of the civilised. In sculpture they have produced nothing their own artists do not ridicule, and in art all their unscrupulous flatterer can say is that they will succeed. So utterly are they without imagination, that they alone of the peoples of earth know nothing of their own history, are totally without legends, have

pièce justificative to defend it. English artists will show ima- now scarcely a relic of folk-lore, and have not one beautiful them, for want of sympathy; they have striven greatly, but cannot define the ideas for which they strove; they have reasoned greatly, and in reasoning boast that their reliance is on the inductive method. That is no discredit to them. To every race its own; and the nation which established representative government and abolished slavery, which has made order and freedom synchronous and compatible, which broke the charm of kingship and founded the only great modern republic, and which, above all, has taught mankind how to conquer yet elevate the conquered, has no reason to fear the coldest judgment of the least biassed historian. But the imagination! The English is the most religious of nations, and its notion of heaven is sitting on a cold cloud singing psalms, and its greatest religious poet imagined cannon the weapon of the Almighty against the rebels of Heaven, and Paradise a garden where oranges grew wild.

Even, however, supposing it true, what does Lord Beaconsfield mean? He says that because the English have imagination, therefore they will succeed in art. Have the imaginative races succeeded in art? The Arabs are perhaps the people among whom imagination is most universally developed, and they never painted a picture or carved a statue, though, when once out of their own land, once deprived by prosperity of their imaginative power, when their poets had done singing and their tale-tellers were exhausted, they built a building or two, the Alhambra and the Taj-for the Taj is Arab, if an Italian built it - which is a joy and a wonder even to minds saturated with the Gothic idea. The Hebrew conceived of Jehovah and wrote the Psalms, and sang so that for all time and through all civilisations man, in moments of extremity, has turned to the Hebrew lyre for the highest expression of his hope, his penitence, and his supplication, but even the Hebrew Temple was built by another race. The Irishman, the Highlander, the Breton, -to these surely imagination has been given in full measure and running over, yet in architecture, in sculpture, in painting, they are far behind the stolid Englishman, who looks on their legends and their poetry as on children's babble, and on themselves as hopeless, because of their imagination. one people, indeed, of the highest imaginative power was given also the highest felicity in art, and the race which imagined Prometheus also built the Parthenon; but in the main, the history of art is the history of the races in whom imagination was at least not the dominant quality. The Arab and the Jew, the Highlander and the Breton, the Irishman and the Norseman had not, says Lord Beaconfield, the assistance of Government, "which I, from my youth up, have held that it would be wise to afford." They lacked the opportunity. True, but what happened to the Greek when he had that assistance? Once in his career the Greek had the hearty help of the richest Government that ever existed, a Government that lavished treasures on Art, a Government whose first idea was, like Lord Beaconsfield's, to develop the splendid; and under that inspiration the Greek, who, without it, had made works before which artists despair, produced that tawdry, magnificent monstrosity, Byzantine Art.

## ALTRUISM AND SELFISHNESS.

THE word "Altruism" no longer needs the explanation appended to it when it was adopted to express the moral ideal of a noble enthusiast whose life was recently reviewed in these columns, in the new religion of Humanity. Whatever could be popularly known of the Positivist philosophy has been made so familiar, that a word embodying its motto, "Vivre pour autrui" -a motto intended to supersede the standard of Christian duty is no longer strange to any reader, and the ideal it suggests has commended itself to many who see no sanction to selfishness in the command to love one's neighbour as oneself. Among these Christian sympathisers with an ideal which was supposed to be higher than that of Christianity was the thinker to whom we have alluded, but the remarks which follow, though suggested by his words, are not illustrated by his life, and we introduce them by referring to him only because the danger of a view we think mistaken has been vividly brought home to our minds by its attraction for such a nature as James Hinton's.

A view which embodies the aspirations of all generous natures, and spans the chasm of warring creeds, must indeed possess a strong attraction for all. Whatever we think of a Being above us, or a life beyond the grave, we all agree, at our best moments, that the best life is the service of our fellows, while the most but himself. Altruism is an attempt to develope this universal feeling on its positive, instead of its negative side, to mark out our path by a point of attraction rather than by a point of repulsion, to show us what to follow, and so allow us to forget what to shun. Its aim is to mould character rather by tracing the aspirations of the best than by inverting the dislike of the worst men; it would, instead of avoiding that which is condemned by all, pursue that which is desired by the élite of the moral To enjoin rather than prohibit is a well-recognised principle in education. Altruism would, in applying it to the self-education which should never cease, replace a mere warning of danger by a guide-post to the heights towards which the eyes of all have been often raised with longing desire.

We have endeavoured to suggest in its strongest aspect the view we nevertheless oppose. The adoption of this ideal, in substituting the duty of all for the duty of some, would, it appears to us, both do much to obscure the universal duty and to lower our reverence for that which is peculiar. To suppose that unselfishness means life for others, is to conceal from ourselves the sacrifices those make who do live for others, and where they are seen, as they often must be, to be impossible, to prepare the mind for a surrender to selfishness. These are our greatest, but not our only objections to this view; it seems to us to tend towards lessening the reverence and indulgence which are both needed by any strongly individual character, and to foster indecision, and sometimes a sort of presumption. And so far are we from regarding these as imaginary evils, that we consider some of them to be exhibited in the education of half the human race. The theory that woman should live for others belongs to the past, but many a woman's character—and still more, we should say, many a man's—has been hurt by a view which keeps down her own preferences and tastes, and encourages her to live the mere parasitic life, which is less valuable in proportion as it is more easy. hatte," says Goethe, of one of his heroines: "in ihrem Leben genugsam einsehen gelernt, wie hoch jede wahre Neigung zu schätzen sey, in einer Welt wo Gleichgültigkeit und Abneigung eigentlich recht zu Hause sind." And there is nothing that so much dries up the fountain of impulse as the constant interruption of small and doubtful claims. The occupation of half the mind with any pursuit is apt to associate it with a sense of baffled weariness and disgust, and any one who has to carry on his own life subject to constant demands from another must lose something of his own individual nature, or perhaps we should rather say, that any one with a strongly individual nature finds this subordination impossible, except for a short time.

There is, in the autobiography of Gibbon, the historian, a graceful little sketch that has doubtless suggested to many among its numerous readers some such exhibition of unselfishness as is there implied-and so complex a thing is human nature, implied, we believe truly-on the part of as selfish a man as ever lived. It is the account, delicately and lightly touched, of the unsatisfactoriness of Gibbon's mature life under the roof of his father, whose death he sincerely mourned, but whose life became a hindrance to all his own views and plans, and a delay to the real commencement of his own life. "My grief was soothed," he says, in speaking of his father's death, with the naïve complacency characteristic of his time as well as his character, "by the conscious satisfaction that I had discharged all the duties of filial piety." That a selfish man should have been subject to a claim, of which even he himself could say that it was thus met, was, we doubt not, the greatest possible blessing to him, and it may be that from some higher point of view many of us will see that the most precious hours of life have been those that have been apparently spoilt by sacrifices to the will of another. Still, we ought not to forget either that the thing to be sacrificed is really, and may be disproportionately valuable, or that it is not every one who has anything to sacrifice. To some natures vicarious interest is the only accessible interest. It would not be much more difficult for most of us to divide the "altruists" from the "non-altruists" of our acquaintance, than to divide the creeping-plants in a garden from those that stand up on their own stem; but certainly this would not be the same thing as dividing the tares from the wheat. No doubt there are many who do not live for others, simply because they are too selfish, but by their side we should have to set some of those whom we could least spare, many a one whose presence, in its magnetic influence, has welded the most various and even jarring natures into a compact circle, and when it has been withdrawn for ever, left a gap that the years do not fill up. Such persons, we should say, are not often altruistic; perhaps we should have to confess, if we were able to recall such a one in a cold critical pursuing them feebly or indolently, or for mixing them up with

selfish of human beings is ready to condemn selfishness in every one mood, that they were not always unselfish. The very fact that any one is endowed with a vivid, rich, definite nature, with the large range of tastes and desires that belong to a rich nature, makes it more difficult for him to put aside his own objects for other people's objects, and yet these are the natures who do most to invigorate and quicken the commerce of life.

"Very well, then," it may be said in reply, "that is living for others, and you are merely urging that the channels of service are various." Not so; you take all meaning out of the precept, if you suppose it fulfilled indirectly. It is very true that to develop all the resource of a man's own nature is to prepare his best contributions for other natures; but to say that he does the one thing for the sake of the other, is to take all that is peculiar and appropriate out of our reverence for the duty which is valuable, just so far as it is difficult. Gibbon was, in a certain sense, living for others when he went to shut himself up at Lausanne to write his history, but the life he led there could not, without the strangest distortion, be called an unselfish one. We cannot at once live for our own aims and for other people's, and we must not expect from men who take one line the kind of virtues developed by the other. It becomes at times, no doubt, a nice question whether the game is worth the candle, but there is no question that you cannot have the game without the candle. The thing which, in its most active form, we call genius, makes much the same demand, in proportion to the size of the nature, in all its forms. Whatever supplies force demands some kind of food.

Perhaps it may be felt, as an objection to considerations like these, that while they may be useful to those who have to put up with other people's selfishness, they do not touch the question whether any one could ever be hurt by making altruism an ideal for himself. I may allow that the rich and varied interests opened to me on our common journey by the cultivated taste and vivid powers of appreciation of your friend ought to outweigh in my recollection, the fact that I was not allowed to decide a single arrangement of the expedition. But would he be less brilliant, less imaginative, less initiative, if he had thought a little more of the comfort of his hum-drum companion? It is a disagreeable confession for a moralist, but if the truth must be spoken, we are afraid, in a good many cases, that he would. There are striking exceptions, which so engrave themselves on the memory that they are apt to do duty for the rule instead of the exception; but in a general way, we fear that poor imperfect human creatures cannot give much study to the desires and impulses of others without repressing their own.

And however reluctant we may be to recognise it, there is nothing in the fact that the subject which absorbs our attention is itself an elevated one to prevent it having this self-centring effect. Perhaps the case in which we oftenest need to remember this law is where we come into close contact with one whose moral ideal, as set forth in his teaching, has enriched and elevated our life, and in whose own life we expect to see this moral ideal emphasized and illustrated. We suppose few who can recall the experience will deny that it generally includes a good deal of disappointment. He to whom we owe the revelation of fresh sources of moral strength in our own soul is, we find with dismay, not elevated above some of the most humiliating weaknesses of humanity. Do not say the moral teaching of such a one must be worthless. You cannot get work done without loss in the moral world any more than in the physical world, and though we could not concede that the force is here limited in the same way, yet it remains an important truth that he who spends much moral energy in one direction has less to spend in another. Take even the ugliest fault of the man of letters, -a want of scrupulous feeling about money matters. We are, for our own part, inclined to rate this fault very high indeed; no other seems to us so apt to invade the rights of others and tempt them towards wrong feeling. Still, we think that allowance ought to be made for it in the case of men who feel that they are doing their kind valuable and inadequately recognised service, which they can only continue if others give them material help. The way in which Mr. Lewes speaks of this defect in Comte himself (of conduct, at least, which seems to us to imply it), is a model of the reticence and temperance with which it should be judged by every one who considers that the person guilty of it has given the world something valuable. But we should never allow that the conduct itself was other than an exhibition of selfishness. Nothing is so intensely a man's self as his ideas. Mythoughts, my plans, my views,-nothing is sacrificed if I may pursue these; everything is if I must surrender them. If the best thing on the whole is that I should pursue them, blame me for grosser and lower views; blame me, of course, if I over-ride the | rights of others in the pursuit of my own ends, but do not blame an attitude of mind that is inevitable for one who is to pursue his own ends, even if in some of its aspects you find it ungraceful and unlovely.

Insufficient sympathy is given to the difficulties of the intellectual life. It involves efforts which hinder some other kinds of efforts that have no more obvious correlation with them than the berries on the ivy have with the angular leaves you will never find on the same spray. It seems odd that the plant cannot give attention at once to its berries and to the shape of its leaves, but so it is, and a good deal of moral impossibility is just as inexplicable. But then we think also that a man who is given up to the life of thought, often also gives insufficient sympathy to that life for others which, if we have rightly judged the meaning of self, cannot be reconciled with a life of thought. Whether it is best to have noble objects of one's own, or to lay aside one's own objects for those of others, is not a practical question, we should doubt if any human being ever had the choice between them. The important matter is to recognise the distinctness of the temptations and the privileges that are peculiar to each vocation. To work at a poem that shall delight many generations, to lay aside all peculiar tastes and plans of one's own, and give a large part of life to serve another in whose society one takes no pleasure,who can compare these achievements? All we are sure of is that no one can compass both of them, and that both tasks are imposed by the Power that rules our lives.

We have touched on only half the difficulty which lies in the way of this view of duty. For in truth humility, as well as the endowments that make humility most difficult, should lead us sometimes to question the impulse leading us towards life for others. There are gifted beings who will do most for others by cultivating their own nature, and there are some so little gifted that they will do most for others by the sad negative aim of an avoidance of all that may hurt their lives. "Whosover will be great among you," we are told, "let him be the servant of all." We often hear the precept dwelt upon, to the exclusion of the warning; but the words should never be recalled without the recollection that they were addressed to those who were struggling for pre-eminence. Here, as elsewhere, the same result is attained by opposite means. Altruism presents a standard that may be shut out either from our sense of wealth, or our sense of poverty,-our belief that something in our own nature is worth cultivating, or our resignation to the discovery that we have nothing to bestow on other natures. And strange as it may seem, it is not impossible that the two feelings should meet in the same mind.

## PICTURES AND DRESS.

"PRIVATE View week is the best time for seeing the fashions," said a lady a little while ago in the fashions," said a lady, a little while ago, in the hearing of the present writer, who thought there was a good deal of truth in the remark, and that it could be no harm for the "horrid male creature," in the intervals of observing the novelties in art upon the walls of the Picture Galleries which have been opened this week, to observe the novelties of fashion within them. It is not, indeed, given to men to remember the fashions of last spring, nor to any except men-milliners to forecast those of next, but there is an advantage in this disability; the present is all the more amusing, even delightfully bewildering. It is a mistake to accompany a lady on these occasions; accurate information is disturbing, and self-esteem is wounded by the gentle ridicule with which an outsider's guesses are met who has not courage honestly to confess to the all-comprehensive ignorance that would be a sure passport to the sweetest indulgence. The temptation to seem to know just a little bit about everything is too strong for most men, and in a lady's company one will be sure to talk of a "Gainsborough" hat or a "Watteau" sacque, when those lovely things have been "quite ages" gone by, and to be impressed by the taste and originality of the wrong costumes,-" wrong" meaning those which are not in unison with the artistic persuasion of one's fair companion. The mere instinct of self-preservation would make us ascertain whether our guide held by Morris or Burne Jones, made her arrangements in obedience to Mr. Whistler's dictates, tried on, or rather off, the oldest things in Greek costume, or was a devotee of those "sweet, sad" harmonies in sea and sage distinctions in these things, nuances as subtle as the Bismarck en when he described Miss Snevellicci "glancing up at Nicholas

colère and Paris brûlé of nearly a decade ago, and a reckless condemnation of bleu fumé, or preference of clair de lune over arc-enciel in bead trimmings, might be as dangerous as an imputation of any of the virtues to Count Schouvaloff at a Tory dinnerparty.

Profound ignorance is, then, the happiest state of mind, and solitude is the most favourable condition for observing the clothes of the period, as displayed at Private Views, where one may see the best and the worst-dressed women in the world, and contemplate them with the serene satisfaction of a member of that sex whose costume has never been, since the woad and sheepskin periods, so simple, so ugly, or characterised by such complete extinction of individuality as it is at present. With what a happy conviction that at least he is not ridiculous, may the male biped mingle with the crowd, his unpresuming clothing serving as a foil to the richness, the variety, and the eccentricities of the dresses which swish, and rustle, and trail all around him, in a frou-frou accompaniment to the old refrain of "That's the way the money goes!" Trying, after a while, to systematise his impressions, he notices that the general snippettiness is less than he has formerly observed it to be; and he is glad, because he has previously bethought himself in a humble way that the best use to which rich silk, sheeny satin, soft woollen stuffs, and majestic velvet can be put is not the cutting of them up into small pieces, and the sewing of those small pieces together in huddled masses, to the total destruction of the idea of lines and drapery. This irritating peculiarity of recent costume is replaced, he perceives, by sweeping lines and curves, by simplicity allied with richness, and a sensible abatement-for which mankind cannot be too grateful, in the interest of feminine gracefulness and of common-sense-of the detestable fashion of "tying back." The fair beings who inspect the pictures "on the line" (frequently with the audible comment of "How awful!") do not hop, or stumble, or struggle in the swathing-bands of their one garment, with knees threatening to protrude, and maimed feet hobbling in imitation of the "Tottering Lily of Fascination," as they hopped and stumbled last year; their skirts fall decently and softly round them, and unless the "horrid male creature" be more than commonly idiotic, there are surely in a few instances symptoms of crinoline,-real crinoline, not wire, not the birdcage or balloon of John Leech's palmy days, but the finely modulating horse-hair of the far past, which lifted the heavy folds of the gown, and left the movements of the wearer free. Some of the portraits on the walls of the Galleries have their gowns (or "frocks," as it is the correct thing, our grand-daughters tell us, to say this season) tied back to what, in real life and any earthly vesture, must certainly be the crack of doom; and they seem quite old-fashioned, after one has been looking for a while at the living pictures.

The hard and brazen style has almost disappeared, and it is replaced, for the most part, by the soft, the timid, the appealing. One does see monstrosities in tight black satin, with arrangements in crimson and yellow upon them (upon inquiry of good-natured female friends, one learns that these horrors are called "pipings") which resemble costume advertisements of Court plaster; and very terrible specimens of blue-and-green embroidery of unsurpassable sickliness, do overcome us, to our especial wonder; but these are passing afflictions. On the whole, dress at the private views last week was a thing of beauty, and in most instances, doubtless, a joy, for a week or two, to its possessors. Richness of material, combined with simplicity of form, invariably recommends itself to the inarticulate half of humanity (on the subject of dress); and there it was, "in perfect heaps," like the good-sense of Mrs. Toots; in purple-velvet pelisse-like gowns, fitting without a crease, and fastened with plain buttons, worn with white baby" bonnets, quite bewitching in form and expression; in dead-leaf satin, in dull black silk, with folds which even Mr. Millais would have to study before he could paint them; in grey cashmere and camels'-hair and homespun, so trim and dainty, with the accourrements of hanging pouch and precise three-cornered pelerine, that two-thirds of each assembly might have been costumed by Mr. Mulready to help the future Mrs. Primrose in the choosing of her wedding-gown, or on their way to visit Miss Austen's county families in Northamptonshire. It is evidently no longer the fashion for young girls to look saucy, and in none of the typical assemblages of last week was the affectation of mannishness that has recently grieved the middle-aged, masculine breast, perceptible. There were plenty of other affectations, but not greens that recall equally Robespierre and roast goose. Even that, and any other kind is better. There was, for instance, the then, however, one would not be quite safe; there are fine good, old-fashioned affectation which was in Dickens's mind