ion by enthusiasm of any project that is of great public interest, and that bids fair to result in immense benefit to society at large. The lamentable feature in the whole matter is the opposition which is being selfishly offered to the undertaking, and the surprisingly narrow state of mind that is thus revealed. Surely the interests of these three important provinces should not be a matter of indifference to the other parts of the colony. Were there nothing to be gained by the country generally, it would still be inexcusable for the inhabitants of other places to offer resistance to that which must benefit their neighbours and fellow-colonists without injuring themselves. But when it is a manifest impossibility that three great and central districts of the Colony can undergo a vast improvement without beneficially affecting all the other districts, the blindness that leads to opposition seems something portentous. We do not know that anyone questions the great advantages to be conferred upon the provinces immediately interested by the construction of the railway. It is acknowledged that already the certainty of a paying traffic exists even alone in the products awaiting on the West Coast the means of conveyance to become the objects of a busy trade, There is already an unlimited supply of coal and wood sufficient almost of itself to justify the construction of the line. There is besides the certainty of a vast development of mineral resources that are known to exist, and the strong probabilities are well nigh boundless. The district, in short, is a mine of wealth now impossible to work because of the want of all that the line will afford, but which possessing the line will go far towards establishing the prosperity of New Zealand once for all. A method of access to difficult portions of the country in Westland, not to speak of advantages arising from the line to Canterbury or Nelson, a supply of provisions at cheap rates, and which cannot now be obtained, and the means of conveyance and and carriage are all that are needed to bring about all that is most desirable. That the opposition given to the project should occasion extreme irritation among the people who see their just wishes and demands so opposed is very natural. Viewing the matter as they do in its true light, and having all the advantages to be obtained full within their sight, the resistance shown to them must be more than galling, and such as may well provoke not only discontent but anger. They may claim to be as well qualified to judge of the project generally as those who oppose it and they have besides exceptional advantages of understanding it that thos others do not possess. They know what would result from that which they desire so ardently to see carried out,and every sensible man must see that the success attending on so great an undertaking carried to its completion in one part of the Colony, must necessarily benefit the whole in no slight measure. Those of us, therefore, who have the true welfare of the Colony at heart and are not blinded by party considerations or influenced by petty selfish interests must sympathise thoroughly with the advocates of the East and West Coast Railway, and applaud the earnestness and energy with which they are pursuing their object.

POOR CHILD!

HERE is another interesting little event connected with secularism :—Miss Hattie Bedient was a quiet and amiable young lady belonging to a country town or village named Hornby, in the State of New York. Miss Hattie Bedient, besides, had no taste for household work, and notwithstanding her quietness and amiability, was possessed of some ambition, so that she longed for one or more of those prizes which, according to the Rev. Dr. Stuart, are to be found so abundantly in the fields white for the harvest where intellectual labourers shall receive a fervent welcome. Having, therefore, studied for some time at her village school Miss Hattie Bedient was sent by her parents to the city and became a student at the Corning-Union School, so that she might be fitted for the eminent career that somewhere or another out of sight, in white harvest fields or elsewhere, lies spread before the feet of those young ladies who attain to academic distinctions.—Unfortunately, however, Miss Hattie Bedient met with some slight disappointment on the threshold of her distinguished course, and, finding that other young ladies were capable of outstripping her in the classes she fell into a desponding state of mind.—What, then, was she to do?—return to her village home, and stoop to help her mother in the making of beds and cooking of victuals,—Perish the thought! It was not for this that she had tasted the sweets of elementary learning or snuffed from afar the mild breezes of Academus.—Still less was it for this that she had drunk in the ethics of the period, and steeped her youthful mind in the morality of secularism. Miss Hattie Bedient therefore, with all the quietness and amiability that characterised her, and with all the morality she had gained in her secular studies, put an end to her existence, and her disappointed ambition both together,—and with her own fair hand nipped all her aspirations in the bud.—Man we are told, is a "minute and unimportant atom," but no professor as yet, howsoever learned or grave, has had the hardihood to enounce so much concerning woman.—Still the only thing to make the suicide of a young girl of little consequence would be the knowledge that she also belonged to that condition of being that was wholly unimportant and worthy of no consideration whatsoever. The belief that apart from the successful ambition for distinction or whatever other gratification may be desired and obtained, life is a matter of little moment,—and that the individual is free from all responsibility, may well lead to suicide. And in fact, we see, that in proportion as religion dies out, the practice of self-murder increases. The case of Miss Hattie Bedient is one that may sadden, but need by no means surprise us. We may expect to witnes more of the same kind.

BIRDS OF A FEATHER.

IT is interesting to trace those points in which atheism agrees with Evangelicalism. We all know the time-honoured system of kidnapping Catholic children that has prevailed among our Evangelical friends, and how, on one pretence or another, they have constantly endeavoured to gain possession of these little ones so that they might shut them up in "Birds' Nests," and other nefarious abodes, where they should be taught to abhor and detest the faith of their fathers. Our Evangelical friends, nevertheless, have failed signally in emulating the cunning of the atheistical party. What they have aimed at doing on a comparatively small scale, the others have undertaken in a gigantic measure, and by adopting secularism have attained to methods of whose vastness and promise of success the less daring Evangelical never dreamed. Secularism finally persevered in must inevitably make the world atheistic, with the exception of that remnant that may be saved in Catholic schools. Atheists, however, in some cases are prepared to follow the example that their Evangelical forerunners have set them, and we find a notable instance of this reported by the French correspondent of a contemporary. It relates to the case of a coachman in Paris who sent his son to be educated by the Franciscans at Toulouse—the boy being seized on by a Freethinker who met with him on his journey, and who took possession of him with a view of poisoning his mind against the Catholic faith. "As soon as the father was informed of the trick," says the correspondent of the *Catholic Review*, "he used every effort to withdraw his son from the hands of his singular protector. Notwithstanding telegrams, the intervention of a monk duly armed with the power of the law, appeals to the tribunals, nothing could be done. The poor workman had to abandon his work and sick wife, and go himself to Cette, where his son was kept in contempt of the paternal authority. Then only was his son restored to him, and the next day, when the pair returned to Paris, they found the mother dying in an hospital. Lenoir, so the poor man was named, by the advice of a lawyer took an action for damages against the Freethinker, and, to the amazement of the whole country, lost it. The case was tried before one of those judges who were *épurés* by the administration, a man of utterly base character. But Lenoir was not discouraged. He appealed, and was supported by Lacointe, one of the most illustrious ornaments of the French bar. He was formerly Advocate-General of the Court of Cassation, and, like so many other distinguished judges, resigned sooner than concur in the persecution of the religious orders. Lenoir won his case and the Freethinker has suffered in person and pocket. But, mark the inconsistency. In an individual instance the State punishes an attempt on the authority of the parent, while it withdraws in a mass the whole school population of the country from a legitimate paternal authority. Certainly the Freethinker has just ground of complaint. He is punished for doing what the State itself has no compunction in doing, and for resisting the doing of which it has punished parents with fine and imprisonment." For ourselves, as we have said, however, a principal interest in this case is that it so exactly reproduces many circumstances of cases in which the abducting parties were members of the Evangelical sects—more especially of that amiable, pious, and truly honest society, the Irish Church Missions—and even the prejudiced and unjust magistrate is a character with which we are not unfamiliar.
