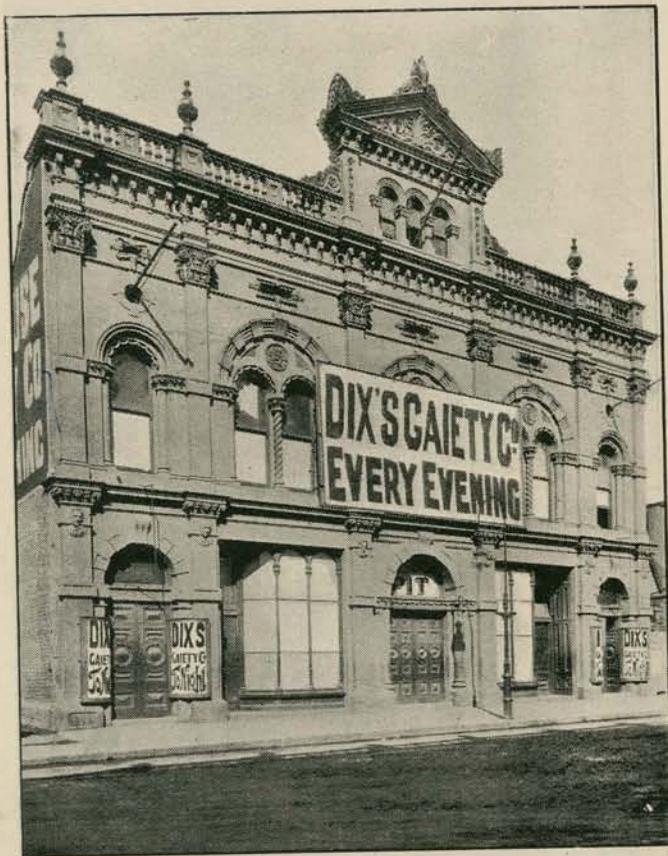


DIX'S GAIETY COMPANY,

OPERA HOUSE, CHRISTCHURCH.



Sole Lessee and Director - - MR. P. R. DIX.
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FROM AN AGRICULTURAL AND PASTORAL POINT OF VIEW.

BY M. MURPHY, F.L.S.

WE may easily imagine the feelings of the enterprising pioneers who, some sixty years ago, after toiling to the top of the Port Hills on what is now known as the Bridle Path, first saw the extensive and evidently fertile plains—at present so thickly populated and well cultivated, but then a wild waste of swamp, river-bed, and waving tussock grass—stretching for forty miles to the foot of the Southern Alps, uninhabited save by native birds, rats, and pigs, which last were descendants of those originally placed there by Captain Cook. Surely some vision of its present appearance arose before them, inspiring them with the tremendous energy which led them to drag their ploughs, and carry their other implements and tools and all their provisions over the steep and rocky hills, and the tireless perseverance with which they gradually overcame all the obstacles which had twice before led to the abandonment of these now smiling plains as unfit for colonisation. The change is indeed marvellous, and fills us with admiration for and pride in those undaunted men and women, many of whom, we are glad to know, have lived to see the happy results of their long and arduous labours. Comfortable homesteads, occupied by a prosperous and happy people, good roads, substantial bridges, and railways now intersect the plains in all directions. The story of the early settlers is full of interest, the struggles and hardships incidental to a new country were many and severe, and have been well described by several who so nobly endured them. It is interesting to note that the first house built in Canterbury was erected by the late Mr. Deans, on what is now known as Riccarton, about the year 1843. The spot is marked by an appropriate memorial stone, which will be regarded with ever increasing interest as time advances. It was on the same property that cultivation was begun by the same gentleman turning the first sod with the first plough. It was found that the soil was admirably adapted for the growth of all cereals as well

CHRISTCHURCH AND TIMARU.