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STUDIES IN NEW ZEALAND SOILS.

THE MICA-SCHIST SILTS.

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WHEN the traveller through Central Otago alights from his coach his first action perhaps is to shake himself free from the millions of spangles of mica-schist which have settled on his clothing during the journey. He sees the mote in the sunbeam here glisten and flash with a new beauty of its own. These particles differ altogether from the dust of other journeys, being tabular or lamellar in form instead of irregular. This entirely novel experience impresses the observant visitor with the great difference between the type of soil over which he is travelling and that more weathered and mixed type near the east coast.

In the plains and river-terraces of this area there have been sorted out, from the harder portions of the metamorphic schists which comprise the country rock, the softer portions, and these have been deposited in the old lake-basins and river-terraces, as one would expect from the shape of the particles, in the form of a tightly packed soil. These soils respond to cultivation and irrigation in a marvellous manner.

The characters which this micaceous rock confers on the resultant soil are quite as important chemically as physically; for it would seem from the limited experience which one may derive from the few soils