

become the annalist of the famous city, in which fortune had cast his lot (1) and where his children, would find a happy home: his only son, Alfred, for years, has been a diligent official in H. M. Customs, at Quebec.

Historical studies, at Quebec, in 1834, were followed only by a few: the very "materials for history" were, one may say—inaccessible, except to some patient Monteils.

The times were not favorable for antiquarian pursuits.

Louis Joseph Papineau, the idol of the hour, was thundering forth from the Legislative Assembly, on Mountain Hill, his scathing denunciations of colonial grievances. Rife everywhere, was political agitation and as well as social upheavings, in 1834-7. The abstract study of the dead past, was lost sight of amidst the bitter exigencies of the present. Who heeded the fate of the piles of musty, but priceless MSS. worm-eaten parchments, lumbering up the dank, underground recesses of the Parliament Building?

A few city book-worms, such as Faribault, Garneau, Wickstead, Fletcher, Fisher might grumble.

Who cared? In the meantime, rust, decay and the rats were doing their work.

The art of the printer had not yet revealed the literary treasures in the archives, colonial Registers, land patents &c stowed away in the vaults of the Court Houses at Quebec, Three-Rivers and Montreal.

The city monasteries kept close watch on their interesting early records; the "Vieux Récits" of the Ursuline Nuns were unknown, except to these devoted teachers of youth. Paris had not been tapped for its valuable state-papers—memoirs and official correspondence. The Public Record Office at London, the Tower, the British Museum and various monasteries were a kind of forbidden ground to colonial investigators of the past; perhaps, for a very good reason.

Important in aim—vast in design—and difficult of execution was the task devolving on Alfred Hawkins and his co-laborers; the real reliable records for history were so scarce.

The period of the 92 Resolutions, was indeed stormy, but there was

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(1) Mr. Alfred Hawkins, was one of the early victims of the Asiatic scourge—dying, at Quebec, of cholera, on 30 June 1851.