

## LE MUSÉE de BETSIAMIS.



READERS of the OWL who have taken a trip down the lower St. Lawrence, have perhaps, visited the Indian Mission at Betsiamis, some two hundred miles from Quebec. Among the many points of interest along the north shore, probably no spot can compare with this in scenes and memories which lead one back in imagination to the time when Canadian soil was yet untrodden by Europeans. Here, every summer, during the months of July and August, assemble the descendants of the peaceful Montagnais, who witnessed Cartier's arrival in Canada, and who gave our fair land its name. During the rest of the year these natives are dispersed in their hunting expeditions over the vast wilds, yet wholly undisturbed by the hum of civilization. Even at Betsiamis they meet few of their pale-faced cousins, and so, for the most part, unlike any other natives in Eastern Canada, they understand no tongue save that of their forefathers, and largely continue their habits and customs of three centuries ago. Exemplary Christians they have ever been since they were made acquainted with the saving truths of holy Faith, by the first missionaries to Canada.

But leaving, perhaps for another occasion, some account of these good Indians and their ways, the OWL desires, in this number, to present to its readers a brief sketch of the fine museum which the Oblate Fathers at the Mission ever show their visitors. Our sketch is a translation of a charming description of a visit to the Museum, which appeared in the July number of *Le Naturaliste Canadien*, of Chicoutimi, over the signature of the gifted editor of that publication. He says:

It is certainly a surprise for the naturalist to find an important museum of natural history on the north shore of the lower St. Lawrence, and especially to find it in the Montagnais village, at Betsiamis.

I had long heard of this collection, but I was far from thinking that it was so considerable. After visiting it I have no hesitation in saying that it would be pointed to with pride in many a famed institution, and even in many a large city:

Its establishment dates from the year 1868. A visit to Betsiamis of the celebrated traveller and naturalist, M. Alf. Lechevalier who passed the fall and a part of the following winter, as the guest of the Oblate Missionaries, furnished Father Arnaud, O.M.I., the occasion of commencing his present magnificent collection.

M. Lechevalier had then but lately arrived in America, with a view to procuring specimens for European museums. This great service to science he has continued to render ever since. He was a friend of the late Abbé Provancher, and *Le Naturaliste*, whilst edited by that distinguished gentleman, published several contributions from the pen of the indefatigable scientist. I thought him dead for several years, but Father Arnaud assures us that he was alive in 1893. He was then in Peru, and by an unfortunate accident, had some time before lost a hand.

Father Arnaud availed himself of several visits which M. Lechevalier made to Betsiamis, to continue to secure zoological, ornithological and ethnological specimens. Under the direction of the scientist, the good Father became skillful in taxidermy. That art soon counted also among its adepts, M. Grosjean, a Frenchman, then in the employ of the Fathers at the Mission and who is, indeed, still with them. A former soldier in Africa, and then in the army of the North during the American civil war, M. Grosjean is a *type très original*. He is, so to say, the curator of the museum of Betsiamis, and he it was that showed me through with that exquisite courtesy of the true Parisian that he is.

The collection of specimens is contained in the building which first served the Fathers as a residence when they