

the improvement, where it exists, is due to the manipulation of the individual workman. The time taken to perfect it is also longer than what is usual in England.

Although there was no exhibit from this side of the Atlantic, Mr. Baxter draws attention to the superiority, in several respects, of cis-atlantic work. Its fine qualities he attributes largely to good rolled paper, black ink and careful printing, and advises English printers to pay more attention to these points. After mentioning, as worthy of praise, the English "Guide to the Paris Exhibition," by Messrs. Clowes & Sons, he adds that it lacks the cleanness and brilliancy of our cis-atlantic productions.

THE FUR-SEAL TRADE.

The advertisement recently published by Mr. Secretary Windom touching the sale of privileges in the fur-seal islands of the North Pacific has not, we suppose, escaped the attention of the British Government. In fixing the term of the lease at twenty years, the Washington authorities are following the traditions of Russia. The first grant of sealing rights was made in 1799. Before that date several companies and firms had been engaged in hunting and trading both in the waters and on the coast. Captain Cook, who visited the islands in 1778, reported their importance to his own government, but the Russians and Siberians were already engaged in the traffic. In 1801 Baranoff, with his trained Aleuts and an armed force allowed him by his government, took charge of the interests of the Russian American Company and founded the settlement at Sitka. In spite of some antagonism on the part of certain tribes, he soon reduced all refractory natives to order, and made everything conduce to the prosperity of the company. The Russian possessions under his administration were extended as far south as Cape Mendocino on the Californian coast. At the end of twenty years the scheme had succeeded so well that many of the Russian nobility considered it a privilege to be connected with it, and the charter, through their influence, was renewed with enlarged powers. In 1840 there was another renewal and the company continued to flourish. But during the term of the next renewal, the growth of colonization on the Pacific coast had weakened Russia's prestige, and the St. Petersburg authorities found the responsibility and expense of maintaining order in so distant a possession so great as to counterbalance the profits. It was, therefore, decided to sell the whole territory both continental and insular. For years no purchaser offered, and when, after long negotiations, Secretary Seward concluded the bargain that made Alaska United States territory, he was the subject of a good deal of ridicule. The event proved, however, that he had not miscalculated its value. The royalty and rent which the government received for the fur-seal islands have alone nearly paid up the purchase money. After the transfer, a San Francisco firm purchased the plant of the Russian company, and in 1870 it was incorporated as the Alaska Commercial Company and secured the lease which expires in May next. For the privilege of taking 100,000 skins yearly, they paid an annual sum of \$317,000, so that the \$7,200,000 paid to Russia for Alaska is almost covered by those disbursements alone. That the United States Government can exercise no exclusive jurisdiction in those waters has been made clear again and again, but it

is evident from the announcement that the old claim of *mare clausum* rights (which were absolutely denied even to Russia by the Washington Government itself) is about to be put forward again. It will be seen that the new agreement will permit only 60,000 seals to be taken yearly, which is a considerable reduction on the take in the last lease. It is also noteworthy that the government reserves the right of rejecting any tender without specifying reasons, so that aliens may be proscribed. Now is the time for England to protest and to have the vexed question settled before a new season arrives and the old conflicts are renewed. If measures are necessary for the protection of the seals, they should be of an international character.

ENGLAND AND PORTUGAL.

The determination that the British Government has shown in disputing the rights of Portugal to bar her advance northwards from Bechuanaland will generally be accepted by colonists as a revival of that Imperial spirit which has so often in recent years appeared to be dormant, if not dead. It is certainly in marked contrast to the tone in which Germany's intrusion at Angra Pequena was received a few years ago. There are, however, circumstances that go some way in explaining the difference. During the last two years England has been surveying her domain in South Africa, and, having obtained from Germany a pledge that she would be satisfied with certain limits, had proceeded to take over Bechuanaland, now distinctly recognized as British territory, and had granted to a powerful company a charter for the development of the region to the north of it. In this region lie Matabeleland and Mashonaland, both ruled by an intelligent chief named Lobengula, and said to contain some of the finest tracts of land in Southern Africa. The whole country is valuable whether for minerals or for the richness of the soil, and is considered well adapted for settlement. In the charter the rights and duties of the company are carefully specified, and in case the conditions were not observed, the Government expressly retained the privilege of revocation. One of its chief members, Mr. Cecil Rhodes, is already well known in South Africa, and with him are associated the Duke of Fife, Lord Gifford, the Duke of Abercorn, and Messrs. Belt, Gray and Cawston. The new enterprise was begun with excellent hopes, with abundant capital, with experience, and, apparently, every advantage in its favour. It was, therefore, disappointing, just at the outset of its operations, to meet not only with conflicting claims, but with an obstinate and even violent assertion of them. It was not, of course, unknown to Mr. Rhodes and his colleagues that the Portuguese had at one time looked upon an indefinite extent of country inland from Mozambique as within the range of their influence, but as they had long since ceased to exercise any jurisdiction beyond a mere strip of coast, it was not apprehended that there would be any difficulty in coming to terms. The task of negotiating on the subject with the Portuguese authorities was entrusted to Mr. Johnston, Consul at Mozambique, who knew better than any Englishman exactly how matters stood.

The Portuguese, however, long regarded Africa as the Spaniards in the 16th century were wont to regard the New World. As the conquerors of Mexico and Peru looked upon the whole American continent as their peculiar possession, so the Por-

tuguese, proud of their early triumphs, have always resented the intrusion of other nations in Africa as an encroachment on territory which they had fairly won. They have not yet forgiven England for disputing their claims to the Congo. And, undoubtedly, the language which a portion of the British press thought proper to use both in the former controversy and the present dispute is not calculated to conciliate them. It is unjust, and even if England's claims were ever so well founded, it is unnecessarily harsh. Such language is all the more unbecoming because Portugal is a little kingdom. Possibly had different methods been employed in the first place, the problem might have been satisfactorily solved. As it is, Portugal's claims, from being vague, are becoming definite through treaties with native chiefs, one of them a rival of Lobengula, so that, if as is now proposed, the matter is submitted to arbitration, she may, even setting aside her ancient pretensions on the ground of conquest and occupation, put forward new agreements exactly similar to those on which England relies. The awkwardness to the latter of this unlooked-for persistence on the part of her rival is that the territory which is thus claimed is not only a part of rich Mashonaland, but would, if left to Portugal, separate England's settlements south of the Zambezi from those north of it on the Shiré and on Lake Nyassa. As war is virtually out of the question, it may be supposed that, unless some compromise be agreed upon, the whole question will go to arbitration. It is only fourteen years since the MacMahon award assigned Delagoa Bay to Portugal, and England may lose in this case too. If so, it is not Portugal but Germany that is likely to reap the advantage, and for that reason it would be wiser for England to come to terms with her old ally, who would probably have yielded already had she been approached in a friendly spirit.

BENEATH A PICTURE.

["In Orgagna's painting of 'The Last Judgment' there is the figure of an Angel, who is loo ing with a feeling of awe and anxiety at the assembled myrads awaiting the last decree of Heaven." *The Parthenon*, (a; magazine) No. VII, p 98]

Fearfully gazing Spirit! wherefore lies
That strange, sad speculation in thine eyes?
Why dost thou shrink, as though beneath a storm,
Shedding the brightness of thine angel form?
Art thou a rebel spirit? Did'st thou fling
Proud threats of old at Heaven's Eternal King,
And, crushed and vanquished, wilt thou soon be hurl'd
Down by the Victor to a demon-world?
It cannot be! Thou art not one of those
Doomed to a dark eternity of woes,
Who gnash their teeth in frenzied pain, and weep,
And vainly pray for everlasting sleep;
No! thou art spotless—all thy sins are dead—
A wreath of glory streams around thy head,
And, if thy countenance is pale and wan,
'Tis that thy love is shown in fear for man.

Yea, fear hath cast a shade upon thy soul,
For worlds are shrinking like a shrivelled scroll,
And all things pass away, and angels gaze
With dim intelligence and strange amaze
On shadowy forms upfloating from the earth,
Roused by the trumpet to a second birth.

Swiftly they soar, as eagles o'er a cloud,
Souls from all climes, a voiceless, troubled crowd,
Sinners and saints, the monarch and the slave,
Bursting at once the bondage of the grave.

Perhaps, amid those sinners there is one
Whom thou dost recognize—an only son—
For whom sad prayers were offered up above
By the deep fondness of a deathless love;
Who, cold and senseless as earth's meanest clod,
Died as he lived, the enemy of God!

* * * * *
And he—the loved, the lost one—cometh now,
With sin's dark curse deep branded on his brow!

* * * * *
Therefore, it is with reason that there lies
That strange, sad speculation in thine eyes;
Therefore, thou shrinkest as beneath a storm,
Shrouding the brightness of thine angel form.

GEO. MURRAY.