

## FROM OUR OWN OBSERVATORY.

### The European War Cloud.

"THE War in the East" has once more assumed a realistic shape, and, unless the rulers of the Great Powers are a great deal more far-sighted than we give them credit for being, the long-expected great war is close at hand. What its actual conditions may be no one can predict just now, for the complications are so intricate that the Powers may not be able to choose their partners, and most of the forecasts of recent years are likely to be falsified. The position of England is a grave one. The Soudan campaign is in progress, the Transvaal trouble is assuming an acute stage, and the collapse of the "European concert" seems likely to leave her with only such allies as may be compelled by circumstances to side with her. "Natural allies" will find themselves, like many brothers in a civil war, ranged on opposite sides in a fight which can only bring disaster upon them both. It may, perhaps, be that Britain is better prepared for emergencies than at any previous crisis. Her army, we believe, is far from being in the sanitary condition it should maintain; and it is not unlikely that forty or fifty regiments may be needed for the Cape. But her navy is acknowledged to be vastly superior to that of any other power; and if President Kruger depends upon receiving active support from the German Emperor, it is likely he will be deceived. With a partly disaffected Ireland and a famishing India, Britain's position seems eminently one which calls for the adoption of the prudent motto, "Defence, Not Defiance." After witnessing the Armenian massacres without stirring, she can afford to stand idly by and see Cretans and Greeks struggling against an overwhelming horde of Turks, especially as her own Tommy Atkins will be busily engaged in blowing Soudanese and Boers to kingdom come. This is evidently the beginning of the millennium.

### Easter.

The great spring festival has just been celebrated in all the Christian lands, most people naturally fully believing that they were keeping a purely Christian festival. We were glad to see the *Toronto Globe* setting people straight in this matter, in its Good Friday editorial column. Its remarks concluded in this startling fashion: "The Cross is probably the result of an attempt to graft a Christian idea on an old heathen custom, the result being that the feast recalls neither heathen nor Christian ideas to the mind, in spite of the portentous tragedy commemorated by the day." Now, we do not at all understand why an event which is supposed to have brought salvation to the world should be described as a "portentous tragedy." It should be the most joyful festival of the opening year, as it is, and should have not the slightest relation to any tragedy. As the *Globe* says, Easter is simply the survival of an old pagan custom, and "Fifteen hundred years before the Christian era Cecrops colonized Attica and made his bun of honey and flour."

### Dr. Rylance on Newspaperdom.

The preachers occasionally indulge in criticisms of the newspaper. It is a very legitimate subject for rational treatment; and when a prominent man like Dr. Rylance undertakes the task, we naturally look for some interesting points. He took for his text this passage from Acts 17: "For all the Athenians and

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