

TALK OF EUROPE

STRASBOURG, which at this time last year was Strassburg, the capital of the Imperial province of Alsace-Lorraine, has returned to France, to the overwhelming joy of the Alsatians. The city, which suffered severely in 1871, was fortunately spared a second bombardment. After '71 there was a great influx of purely German elements, and the attempt at complete Germanization was nowhere more strongly shown than in the university, which, suppressed during the French Revolution, was reopened in 1872, provided with a complete set of German-built 'Instituts,' of great elaboration, and made a centre of exclusively Prussian 'Kultur.' Now, of course, all that is changed. The elaborate buildings remain, housing in their two pompous shells the equipments of learning in the provision of which the Germans excel, but the Prussian staff has gone, and with it the German contingent of students. French professors of European reputation control the six faculties which the university boasts, but so many French students have laid down their lives in the war of liberation that the classes are not at the moment full. The university offers to those English and American students who would formerly have gone to a German university a wonderful opportunity to acquire at the same time the best elements of both German and French education — the library, which remains, is as strong in German books as are the best German universities. Everything is being done by the authorities to make English and American students welcome, and we hope to see full advantage taken of their generous anxiety to make English-speaking students at home in their ancient city.

THERE is one sign of the fact that perhaps the Conference will not sit in Paris much longer, and that is the closing of the Hôtel Dufayel. It is a preposterous mansion, built for himself by the millionaire Whiteley of Paris, and combining every

known error of taste, from the fact that its exterior calls for a wide green park and has not even a garden, to the immense quantities of figures of ladies all over the house. In plaster and marble, in paint, in bronze, on walls and ceilings, in niches, at unexpected angles of the stairs, outside on the veranda and inside where the footmen stand, these multitudinous ladies affright the eye with their exiguous clothing, pronounced figures, and lack of artistic excellence. When the mansion was first thrown open to the Allied Press these ladies provided the cynical journalistic mind with a joke which lasted for months. When a man is thinking of his work, of telephones, of special wires, of how to get a taxi, of where to find his secretary, and of the urgent necessity of being in seven places at once, as implied in his editor's latest telegram, it is with impatience that his harassed eye falls upon a nude simpering like an imbecile. The Hôtel Dufayel, in spite of these absurd decorations, was a comfortable home for journalists, who could there find telephone facilities and comparative quiet — could meet their colleagues, and every now and then combined to entertain important figures of the Peace Conference. Women, even accredited journalists, were excluded, save when concerts were given. The late M. Dufayel would have wondered to see how closely modern fashions enable living women to follow the costumes of plaster ones.

THE chief count on which the ex-Kaiser is to be tried — if ever he is tried — is the breach of the Treaty of 1839 guaranteeing the independence of Belgium. This outcry about the sanctity of treaties is either ignorance or cant, says the *Saturday Review*. There has never been an important international treaty that has not been torn up or ignored or modified within a few years of its signature. The Congress Treaty of Vienna, 1815, was torn up in 1830 by the separation of Holland and

Belgium. The Treaty of Paris, 1856, was reversed as to its chief clause by Russia in 1871. The treaty of London, 1852, which guaranteed to Denmark the Duchies of Schleswig and Holstein, was torn up by Bismarck in 1864, England, a signatory, standing idly by. The Berlin Treaty of 1878 has been altered out of recognition. A study of *The Great European Treaties of the Nineteenth Century*, edited by Sir Augustus Oakes and Mr. R. B. Mowat, published by the Clarendon Press, would be an education for our press and politicians.

* Sir Herbert Stephen is perfectly right when he says that such words as 'trial,' 'justice,' 'evidence,' and 'counsel' are misused in connection with William of Hohenzollern's appearance in London. What we propose to do with the ex-Kaiser is, not to try him, but to punish him. For that purpose a Court-martial would be the best tribunal, and William might be indicted for breaches of martial law, as recognized by the regulations of all civilized armies, and amplified by what are known as the Hague Conventions of 1907, which were signed by Germany. To mention only two of those Conventions, No. 8 (Articles 1 and 2) forbids the laying of automatic contact mines off the ports and coasts of the enemy, and the use of torpedoes which do not become harmless when they have missed their mark. Convention 9 forbids the bombardment by naval forces of undefended ports and towns. A Declaration 'prohibits the discharge of projectiles and explosives from balloons.' How queerly that reads now!

THE great Irish Peer, Lord Meath, has recently printed the following scheme for the government of Ireland. He writes:

'May I offer the following as my humble contribution toward the settlement of the Irish Constitutional problem?

'1. In view of the feelings of the mass of the Irish people toward the United Kingdom, the political unity of Ireland must ultimately mean separation from Great Britain and the Empire.

'2. If Ireland is, therefore, to remain within the Empire there must be no United or Federal Irish Parliament in Dublin.

'3. There can, in my opinion, be no permanent peace between Ireland and Great Britain until a Federation of Independent States within the British Isles, under the control of a Central Parliament representing all the States sitting in London, has been established, on a somewhat similar model to that of the United States, and of our own self-governing Dominions of Canada, Australia, and in a modified manner of South Africa.

'4. As it may be many years before such a radical change in the Constitution will approve itself to the people of Great Britain and Ireland, some temporary kind of Home Rule in Ireland must be adopted which will not interfere with the adoption later on of a system of Federation of Independent States within the British Isles, placing them on the same political plane as the British self-governing Dominions.

'5. It is generally acknowledged by thinking men that Ulster must not be coerced.

'6. The coercion of Ulster would mean the establishment of a permanent running sore in the side of Nationalist Ireland. Nationalist Ireland would be far stronger if she left Ulster severely alone.

'7. Ulster, or the six northern counties, therefore, should be offered the choice of separate Home Rule under the control of the British Parliament in matters of an Imperial character, or of remaining as at present part of the United Kingdom.

'8. Nationalist Ireland, outside Ulster, or the six northern counties, should be given the choice of Provincial or of United Home Rule, subject to the control of the British Parliament in all Imperial matters.'

THE two millions a day we are spending more than our income will not be saved by trifles or by trifling.

It is incredible — it is uncalled for — it is ruinous waste that the cost of the Fleet is now one hundred and forty millions a year! (In 1904 it was thirty-four millions!) So the whole national expenditure before the war was only a third more than the present navy estimates. Then a huge anti-German Fleet had to be ready to strike! Now that German Fleet is at the bottom of the sea!