

The Miracle of Modern Italy!

An Empire Built in Barely 80 Years

By JOHN A. MENAUGH

MODERN ITALY'S story rightly begins with a historic meeting of two men on July 20, 1858, in the obscure town of Plombières, a French watering place in the Vosges mountains. This meeting was reported later to have been an accidental one. Actually it was prearranged. One of the men was Count Camillo Benso di Cavour, prime minister of the Turin government of Piedmont. The other was Louis Napoleon, emperor of France. Cavour, who had dreamed all his life of a united Italy, knew that the military forces of Piedmont, without outside help, could not expel the Austrians from the northern Italian states of Lombardy and Venetia. His purpose in meeting Napoleon was to enlist French aid in the undertaking. At the Plombières conference an agreement was reached whereby France and Piedmont were to declare war on Austria with the aim of forcing her to relinquish her Italian possessions so that a north Italian state could be formed.

In exchange for his help Napoleon was to receive the province of Savoy and possibly the county of Nice, former French territories.

This province of Savoy was the original seat of the family of Cavour's sovereign, Victor Emmanuel II., king of Sardinia. Piedmont, most westerly of northern Italy's states, was the mainland part of the kingdom of Sardinia. The house of Savoy had acquired Piedmont (Continued on page five.)

