

The first cause of the conflict at Geneva was the bestowal in 1874 by the Roman Curia of the title of Vicar-Apostolic on M. Mermillod, *curé* of Geneva, and during a space of some years Bishop of Hebron, *in partibus*. The favours bestowed on this ecclesiastic were contrary to engagements into which the Pope had entered, never to designate any of the Geneva clergy, and to consider this canton as an appendage of the diocese of Fribourg. The Genevese Government, and the Federal Council itself, in place of ignoring the title, which, being a usurped one, had no legal value, committed the error of having recourse to coercive measures. Monsignor Mermillod, though a Swiss citizen, was expelled from the territory by a decree of the Federal Council, which thus gave him the opportunity of turning round in a majestic manner, while passing the frontier, and of blessing, with his episcopal hands, the country which had rejected him from her bosom.

This unconstitutional measure, which, it must be confessed, met with almost unanimous approbation from the Swiss press, was the signal for persecution being directed against that portion of the Roman Catholic body which was deprived by the Government of its places of worship, its priests being meanwhile rejected for the benefit of the Old Catholics. In the commune of Compezière the sight was even seen of an infant being taken by force with an escort of soldiers and locksmiths to an Old-Catholic baptism, which the *curé* and the local authorities were endeavouring to prevent by closing the doors of the church. Neither did the Genevese Government render itself less ridiculous by prohibiting the ecclesiastical habit, while, at the same time, they neglected to specify the length of the bands, the ribbons, and the buckles which were henceforth to fall under the blows of the law.

A further experience came very shortly after to confirm once more this truth, that a Government, even that of Geneva, could hardly be either a good father of the Church or a good theologian. One could decree the dismissal of Roman Catholic parish priests, installing Old Catholics in their stead; one could even, in order to elevate the governmental institution, call Père Hyacinthe to perform service in the new