

But amid all the variety which existed in the election of Bishops, there was one element that ever remained constant—the necessity of procuring the consent of the Provincial Bishops. I do not know of any exception save in the case of an unanimous election. Then indeed the consent of the Metropolitan and other Bishops was given even in the case of unbaptized laymen, such as St. Ambrose, Eusebius, etc. It was an established principle that unanimity was at all hazards to be obtained, the blessings of which are summed up by St. Ambrose, “Where there is a demand from all, we ought by no means to doubt that there is the Lord Jesus the author of good will, the arbiter of prayer, the president of the ordination, and the bestower of grace.”

*Ubi universorum postulatio conquirat dubitare nos nequaquam oportet ibi Dominum Jesum et voluntatis auctorem, et petitionis arbitrum, et ordinationis presulem vel largitorem gratiae.**

He says, also, that when a choice is unanimous, it is Divine. “It is deservedly believed that he is divinely elected whom all have demanded.” *Merito creditum quod divino esset electus fuisset quem omnes postulavissent.†*

There are to be found, however, exceptions even to this rule, the exceptions proving the presence and the influence of the Provincial Bishops. The election of St. Martin of Tours is a case in point. Sulpicius Severus says, “An incredible multitude not only in that town, but even in neighbouring cities, had come together to offer their suffrages.” *Incredibilis multitudo non solum in eo oppido, sed etiam in vicinis urbibus ad suffragia ferenda convenerat.‡*

But some of the Bishops objected to St. Martin's election, because, “His person was mean and not worthy of the Episcopate, and he was clad in sordid raiment.” *Adversati sint quod persona esset contempta nec episcopatu digna, vestique sordida vestiretur.*

The people however prevailed and he was consecrated. This divine unanimity was often hard to procure, and “*interventors*” were employed by the Bishops to bring it about. If the Metropolitan thought that unanimity was improbable, then instead of going to the vacant see, he requested the people to send to him two or three delegates in the name of the whole, and then the delegates and Metropolitan decided on the Bishop. However, as these exceptions are set forth largely by Bingham, I shall

* Lib. 10., Ep. 82.

† Ep. ad Vercellenses.

‡ Madg. Cent. Vol. 3, 1985.