

The Popular Vote of England.

From the London Spectator. The amazing party mendacity of the Conservative papers in asserting that the Conservative minority represents (if the metropolitan boroughs be excluded) a real majority of the English electors, has induced us to obtain a rough calculation of the actual votes given in all the contested elections of which the results were known up to last Thursday night.

In Lancashire, the boasted area of the great Conservative triumph, the actual popular vote given in the contested counties is nearly—possible balanced, an infinitesimal majority of not quite two hundred belonging to the Conservatives. The contested boroughs have given a majority of near 5,000 votes to the Liberals, and the contested counties (though represented in Parliament solely by eight Conservatives) have only given a majority of 5,000 to the Conservatives.

In Lancashire, therefore, may be practically said to be in equilibrium on the great question of the day. Its popular vote is ambiguous. It can be made up either way. It believes in the Liberal policy with its soul, and hates it with its carnal passions. It tries to be Liberal, but its jealousy and dislike of the Irish are too much for it. The spirit wrestling against the flesh has consequently divided all but equally between the two scales of the balance.

Now let us look to the other great manufacturing county—Yorkshire. Here, in spite of our disadvantage of the total exclusion of the great uncontented Liberal division of that county, the North-West Riding, there is only a Conservative majority of about 140 on the county struggle as yet known (which would be transformed into a considerable Liberal majority if the North-West Riding had been contested), and a vast majority for the Liberals on the contests in the boroughs, a majority of about 8 to 3. The county as yet gives a vote which we may fairly consider as making the uncontented county division into consideration, as full two to one for the Liberals. Yorkshire, therefore, has a strong opinion in favor of the Liberal policy.

London separately (including Greenwich) gives about two votes for the Liberals. So far, then, we have a popular vote practically ambiguous in Lancashire, but Liberal in the ratio of two to one in the other two great centres of population, Yorkshire and the metropolis. Now let us consider the English county vote, exclusive of the two great counties we have estimated separately. This gives, of course, a Conservative majority, but one in amount nothing like that which the list of the number of members returned on each side would alone suggest.

The popular majority for the Conservatives in the other contested counties of England and Wales is not 25,000 in a total number of 272,000 votes—that is, is not a majority of 9 per cent. If the county contests in Lancashire and Yorkshire were taken into account, the majority would be even smaller than before on the total popular vote given. On the other hand, take the boroughs of England, exclusive of those of the counties already taken into account, and of London, and the popular vote shows a majority of about 85,000, or more than 20 per cent., and if we add the majorities in the Lancashire and Yorkshire boroughs and London, the popular majority would be increased to above 100,000 votes on the whole boroughs of England, and the percentage to 24 per cent. While the English counties alone have not given a popular majority of 9 per cent. on the total vote for the Conservatives, the English boroughs alone have given a popular majority of 24 per cent. And by taking England (and Wales), counties and boroughs, altogether, the popular vote gives the Liberals a majority of about 172,000 votes for the Liberals; that is, more than 14 per cent. (say) one-seventh of the whole of votes given, and a far greater popular majority than the Conservatives have attained in the counties alone.

So much for England, which has been biased in the counties by the suppression of the clergy taking England (and Wales), counties and boroughs, altogether, the popular vote gives the Liberals a majority of about 172,000 votes for the Liberals; that is, more than 14 per cent. (say) one-seventh of the whole of votes given, and a far greater popular majority than the Conservatives have attained in the counties alone.

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