

FOOTBALL.

LUTON AND THE ENGLISH CUP.

A FRUITLESS JOURNEY TO MARLOW.

THE FOG KING RULES THE DAY.

On Saturday another round of ties in the qualifying contest for the English Cup were down for decision; but owing to a thick fog prevailing several games had to be abandoned. Amongst these was that between Luton and Marlow, and the misfortune for the Lutonians was heightened by the fact that this match had to be played away from home. The Luton players left by the 9.5 train. On arrival in the Metropolis it was discovered that London was enveloped in the impenetrable gloom of a "pea-soup fog." This rendered journeys by ordinary vehicles positively dangerous, the traffic being congested at important spots. The party reached Paddington safely, however, and it was a merry party that left in a commodious saloon at about half-past 11. The journey to the river-side town was performed in good time, the principal topic of conversation on the way down being the probability or otherwise of the fog lifting sufficiently to enable a start to be made. The general opinion seemed to be that no cup-tie would be played. Marlow reached, it was found that the fog was still thick, though somewhat whiter than the Cimmerian gloom which had been experienced in London. Necessary refreshment having been taken a move was made to the Crown Ground, the scene of the operations. Here it was ascertained that there was a large attendance, something like a thousand spectators being present. These included large contingents from High Wycombe and other places in the neighbourhood, where the interest in the encounter was said to be very great. The general opinion amongst these seemed to be that the chances of victory were in favour of Luton. The ground was found to be in satisfactory condition; but King Fog held undisputed sway. So thick at one time was the mist that it was impossible to see more than 20 yards up the ground, then the fog would lift like a curtain at a theatre and reveal to view the space from side to side. It was never possible, however, to see from end to end, and it was generally considered that no cup-tie could be played. Mr. Saywell soon put all doubts on this point to an end by deciding that the conditions rendered it impossible for a cup-match to be decided. The teams were still engaged, though, the understanding being that a friendly of 35 minutes each way should be played.

The sides ranged up in the following order:—

Marlow: Goal, M. H. Routledge; backs, F. T. Handsomebody and G. Morton; half-backs, J. Spindlo, J. Ellerton, and E. Shaw; forwards, W. Davis and J. W. Janes (right), H. L. Wethered (centre), F. O. Nicholls and C. A. Shaw (left).

Luton:—Goal, Williams; backs, McCartney and McEwen; half-backs, Davies, Stewart and Docherty; forwards, Gallacher and Coupar (right), Galbraith (centre), McInnes and Ekins (left).

Referee: Mr. T. W. H. Saywell; linesmen, Messrs. Gibbs (Luton) and J. G. Meakes (Marlow).

At the outset, it should be said, Marlow had but nine men, Routledge and Wethered appearing on the scene when play had been in progress about five minutes, Handsomebody keeping goal meanwhile. Luton won the toss, and early in the game the visitors, who played in white, became busy. Galbraith broke through, and, from a centre by Ekins, sent in a shot which gave Handsomebody a deal of trouble. When the operations had been conducted for a space in the impenetrable gloom Gallacher got clear and landed the ball on the net as the result of a good run. Hands against Marlow gave the opponents another opportunity of advancing which they eagerly seized, the keeper being again tested thrice in rapid succession, Handsomebody behaving splendidly on each occasion. Gallacher, receiving from Coupar after a capital run, scored a beauty five minutes from the start. Coupar was adjudged to be off-side from a centre by Ekins; but the game continued at the Marlow end for a time. Hands against Galbraith did not relieve for long, and clearances by Morton and Shaw were noted. Thereafter Marlow went to the other end and, judging by the time they were absent, it seemed that they were pressing somewhat. A great shout of applause betokened that something out of the ordinary had happened, but it was impossible to determine what. Luton were next observed to advance on the left, and later on good work by the visitors was neutralised by Gallacher being given off-side. A capital effort by Stewart was well negotiated and Gallacher steered very wide of the mark. Judging by the groans which were to be heard just after it would seem that Luton were penalised for fouling in mid-field, following which Marlow went up, only to be stopped for some infringement. A neat shot by McInnes went over the bar, and a corner forced by Luton was unproductive. Another corner was just as unfruitful later on. Then shouts at the Luton end were heard and inquiry elicited that Wethered had managed to beat Williams, though the fact that he had handled the ball in doing so led Mr. Saywell to disallow the point. More good play by Luton was witnessed, and after two or three failures on the part of his comrades Gallacher secured from the left wing and notched a beauty. At the interval the score was:

LUTON, 2; MARLOW, 0.

Soon after the re-start Luton obtained a resultless corner, while more points of a like nature accrued. Thereafter McInnes was perceived to come through well and, beating the backs cleverly, the left winger put on Luton's third goal. Good work by the same player was subsequently noted, and then Galbraith missed badly when standing right in front of goal. Marlow scored through the medium of Janes, and the only other point of interest which was able to be seen was that Ekins struck the post with a hot shot, the ball rebounding into play. It should be said that Coupar left the ground before the finish. When the end came Luton retired winners of a curious game with the following totals:—

LUTON, 3; MARLOW, 1.

It was impossible to follow the game properly; but it was able to be seen that the homesters were a medium lot. They were never able to compare in point of skill with their adversaries, however, and expressions of admiration of the trickiness of the Luton forwards were plentiful. The winners gave a fairly good display; but they never exerted themselves to the full. It was clear that the winners were by far the superior combination, and the Lutonians came away with sanguine expectations as to the outcome of the replayed tie on Wednesday.

RE-PLAYED TIE AT MARLOW.

LUTON WIN EASILY.

The conditions under which the Luton players set out on Wednesday to Bucks. were quite different from those which existed on Saturday, for there was an entire absence of fog and bright sunshine was experienced. The journey was performed by the same route and the same trains, the only difference on this occasion being that only about half-a-dozen persons other than officials accompanied them. Marlow was reached in good time, and it was found that arrangements had been made for running excursion trains from various places in the neighbourhood. Go where one would he found that the confidence which had existed prior to Saturday amongst the Marlow folks had faded into nothingness and that in its place had come a feeling of doubt as to the probable outcome. Those who had come in from Wycombe and elsewhere did not disguise their wish that the fortunes of war might go in favour of the strangers. A quarter of an hour before the time fixed for commencing operations a good muster of spectators were present on the ground, and the numbers were so largely augmented that when play had been in progress for a few minutes there must have been close on 2,000 present. It was able to be perceived that the ground was in first-rate condition, the turf showing little trace of the heavy rains which had fallen of late. Save for a ridge which ran down the centre, the pitch might be described as excellent.

When the time for starting came Mr. T. W. H. Saywell took command of the following sets of contestants;—

Marlow: Goal, H. G. White; backs, E. Shaw and G. Morton; half-backs, J. Spindlo, J. Ellerton and G. M. Faulkner; forwards, W. Davis and J. W. Janes (right), H. L. Wethered (centre), F. O. Nicholls and C. A. Shaw (left).

Luton: Goal, Williams; backs, McCartney and McEwen; half-backs, Davies, Stewart and Docherty; forwards, Gallacher and Coupar (right), Galbraith (centre), McInnes and Ekins (left).

Linesmen: Messrs. J. G. Meakes (Marlow) and J. Finlayson (Luton).

It will be perceived that the Marlow eleven was somewhat differently constituted to that of Saturday; but it could scarcely be said that this had a weakening effect, for the new comers proved themselves worthy exponents. The home captain beat Stewart in the spin of the coin and, wise in his generation, he decided to take advantage of a strong wind which was blowing straight down the ground. The start was of a sensational character, for no sooner had the ball been set rolling than the Lutonians made their way down and obtained a corner. This was so well placed that McInnes headed in; the ball struck the post and rebounded, and Galbraith had no difficulty in beating the custodian. Some dissatisfaction appeared to exist as to Mr. Saywell's decision, many of the spectators being of opinion that the ball had gone over the goal-line off a Lutonian, in which case no corner ought to have been allowed. However this may have been the visitors turned their opportunity to account, and so ere the game was a minute old they were one to the good. Thereafter the home lot woke up and, aided considerably by the wind, beat back their opponents and carried the fray into Luton quarters. Playing in determined fashion the Marlow men managed to advance by degrees and ultimately Ellerton took a flying shot, the ball going high over the bar. The effort was a wild one, and necessarily the forward string had no chance. Stewart retaliated with a long one when Luton had returned to the home end and Gallacher sent wide across the goal, a free-kick being the outcome. Play was very interesting hereabouts, the Marlow representatives infusing plenty of pluck and dash into their display. They were playing for all they were worth and proved strong in defence. McEwen was deservedly applauded for some excellent kicks and Docherty was loudly execrated for a foul. The Marlow men made their way into the Luton confines in good style; but Stewart cleared. At the other end a goal-kick relieved the homesters. McInnes had evidently collided with an opponent just now, for he bore traces on his face. Neat play was noted on the Luton left, a foul by "Gally" spoiling the effort. Ellerton was responsible for another long shot which travelled wide of the mark, and he was generously applauded by the Marlow folks present. Ekins put himself off-side with the customary result, and Ellerton seized another opportunity to try a long-range shot, this proving as unsuccessful as those that had gone before. Ekins forced a corner, and this was

productive of a stiff struggle in front of the home fortress. The Marlow defence was very severely taxed; but the ball was at length got away, hands against Coupar serving to remove the fray still further in the direction of Williams's charge. C. A. Shaw, who had been most prominent amongst the home five, dispatched a good one at Williams which that keeper caught easily. Two or three of the forwards attempted to knock him into the net with the ball in his hands; but they might as well have tilted at the Nelson Column for all the effect that was produced. Even the Marlow supporters applauded the Luton keeper's performance—than which no praise could be better. The local forwards continued to trouble the visitors' defence considerably, though they invariably failed to accurately locate the position of the goal. Coupar was pulled up for fouling, and then Gallacher made amends for the offence of his partner by showing some extremely pretty play. A loud groan from the spectators gave the intimation that there had been more questionable play; this time Galbraith was the culprit. The visiting centre forward atoned for his fault by making an excellent long shot which enabled McInnes to head in, though the ball unfortunately travelled a bit wide. Shaw gave another illustration of how not to do it, the leather finding its way over the cross-bar once more. Ekins indulged in one of his lightning runs and finished up by shooting hard; a score seemed inevitable, when Galbraith managed to put his foot in the way and divert the course of the ball. More pressure by the home combination followed, and things looked bad for the strangers when Stewart fouled Wethered not far from where Williams was stationed. A corner was the outcome of the free-kick. Undeterred by previous failures, the Bucks. men came down again, and the Luton defenders had a warm time of it. E. Shaw, by the way, was playing a brilliant game at back for the home contingent, his clearances being admirable. Once or twice hereabouts he especially distinguished himself. A beauty from the foot of Docherty was cleverly dealt with by White. Hands against Marlow near goal threatened to be dangerous; but vigorous defence had the effect of keeping the ball out, and a corner which accrued to the "stripes" was unproductive, Docherty eventually sending over the goal-line. At this stage the ball resented the vigour with which it had been kicked and burst. Following hands against Stewart Gallacher broke away splendidly and shot hard, the keeper saving somewhat luckily. Another grand long one from the right-winger went into White's hands, a feat which was emulated at the other end by Shaw. McEwen cleared in fine style when the homesters seemed certain to score, and McCartney followed suit in the next minute when danger threatened once more. Williams covered himself with honour by saving magnificently just later, his throw out from goal landing the ball quite a third of the way up the field. Nothing further of interest transpired prior to the interval, when the positions were:

LUTON, 1; MARLOW, 0.

With the wind in their favour in the second half it looked any odds on Luton, for the Marlow lot showed signs of the severe struggle which they had made in the first half. Immediately after the re-start Luton went up well and from a header by McInnes Ekins sent behind. More groaning saluted Docherty for the customary offence against the laws. Coupar succeeded in forcing a corner with a long shot, and another corner came at once from the other side, the custodian having been compelled to handle the ball. McInnes headed in capitally on the second occasion, though only to see the ball kicked away smartly. Docherty was responsible for an attempt which was almost productive of the desired result, a further corner to some extent compensating for the lack of a goal. The kick from the corner flag was unfruitful. From an effort from a distance by Gallacher yet another corner accrued, and then from a centre by Docherty Gallacher sent just over the bar. Hands against Marlow was counter-balanced by a foul against Ekins, while a capable attempt by the Luton outside right was grandly saved by E. Shaw. Morton cleared equally well from McInnes; but a foul against Marlow brought a resumption of the pressure. Ekins centred finely just after and when the ball was sent out Coupar pounced on it and increased his side's lead with a shot which gave White no chance whatever. Laughter was occasioned by McCartney with a huge punt sending the leather into an adjoining street. Marlow attacked hotly and McCartney headed away finely, Stewart eventually relieving admirably. From a centre by Ekins Gallacher shot wide and a pretty try by Coupar was excellently dealt with, Gallacher striking the post with a resounding bang when White had sent the leather out. Spindlo spoiled a good effort by the Luton forwards, and McEwen cleared in first-rate fashion from C. A. Shaw. Gallacher was responsible for another beauty which struck the post, while just after McCartney was stopped for a foul that was not of a very serious nature. Faulkner sent over the bar, and immediately afterwards Gallacher obtained the third goal from a well-judged centre by Ekins, the custodian being completely beaten by the shot, which was a very heavy one. Davies sent behind with a long one and when Coupar had been stopped once more for fouling the Lutonians gave a sample of what they are capable of in the way of passing. By means of admirable combination they made their way to the Marlow end and forced a corner. Davies placed this well and Stewart's head did the rest, the outcome being that Luton were now four to the good. Galbraith narrowly missed; but this was not very material, for the fifth point was not long delayed. E. Shaw conceded a corner and Docherty placed so accurately that the ball went through off the keeper. From this stage onwards the story was of the superiority of the leaders being exemplified, the homesters being outplayed at every point. Splendid shots by Galbraith, Stewart, and McInnes were noted in turn, these failing by the veriest trifles. Strive as they would, however, the Lutonians found themselves unable to notch more goals, and so they had to content themselves with a score which was still sufficiently eloquent as to their superiority. Truth to tell, the Luton men did not seem to be trying very hard towards the close, their exhibition partaking very largely of the gallery order. The final score was—

LUTON, 5; MARLOW, 0.