

FOOTBALL.

LUTON AND THE CUP.

THE 'SPURS VANQUISHED.

THE COMPETITION PROPER ENTERED.

Saturday last was a great day for local footballers, for then had to be fought out on the Luton ground the game which should determine who were to be champions of the ninth division in the English Cup competition for the season. During the last six years Luton have only twice failed to achieve that distinction—once when they were eliminated at Wimbledon by the Polytechnic and last year when the Hotspur from Tottenham gave them their quietus in the first of the qualifying rounds. When it became known that the same teams would this season meet in the divisional final speculation was rife as to the probable outcome. "When Greek meets Greek then comes the tug of war," and so it was anticipated that when the 'Spurs met the Lutonians the contest would prove a close one. As it happened the margin of the homesters at the finish was fairly comfortable; but not many of the prophets outside Luton ever dreamed that the "straw-plaiters," as we hereabouts are still erroneously styled, would dare to falsify the prognostications of the wiseacres of the London football world to such an extent. From the outset it was apparent to any but those who wilfully blinded themselves to facts that the chances were altogether in favour of Luton. The teams had met on three occasions previously during the season and the Tottenham men were not justified in claiming honours, whereas two victories had fallen to the Lutonians and the barren honour of a pointless draw at Tottenham. Despite all this it was generally felt that the 'Spurs would make a gallant effort to repeat their last year's triumph, and accordingly public interest in the encounter gathered strength both in London and the Luton district as the all-important day approached. For once in a way the weather favoured the local authorities, for though cold it was fine. The ground was in a passable condition, for despite the fact that the surface was hard frozen it was still playable. The fact that the players slipped about freely was not very material, for no unpleasant consequences accrued, happily. At the time fixed for commencing there was a crowd of several thousands present; the grand-stand was packed, and even the seats reserved for the Press were encroached upon. It should be said that a couple of excursion trains on the Midland Railway were freely patronised by residents in the London district, some hundreds taking advantage of the facilities offered. Before operations commenced the Red Cross Band discoursed sweet strains to the delight of the crowd, who were palpably excited to a man.

When the Luton players, who were attired in white, turned out they were enthusiastically greeted, while an outburst of applause little less in volume burst forth when the 'Spurs emerged from the pavilion. It was fortunate that both sides were able to put their most resolute and brave players in the field, but the stipend of the Surveyor by £50 a year. It appears that there was the risk of losing the official if something had not been done and we regard this as ample explanation, for it would have been a terrible mistake to permit Mr. Evans to depart. There has been far too much dislocation of the public work caused by these changes in the past, and we are glad that the policy which the Council have now adopted is that of recognising the value of a good man.

Head of—as in the past—allowing him to

The rough capital. "There are as good uphill against the wind truism which is somewhat great excitement and sooble is always to catch furious. At the commencement have proved their at the players were under the influence of the officiate-ment, and as a consequence the football was a very high standard, good combination being at a discount. There was plenty of heavy kicking and wild dashes; but neat play was rarely witnessed in the period before the interval. Early in the game Coupar was pulled up for handling the ball unluckily, a decision which was balanced by one against the 'Spurs for fouling near goal. Tricky play on the home right enabled the Lutonians to advance a good distance, and then a brief cessation was necessitated by Montgomery sustaining a kick on the head from Gallacher. The kick, it is scarcely requisite to observe, was purely accidental, while it was gratifying to be made aware that "Monty," as his admirers called him, was not much hurt. Tottenham played up in determined fashion and they managed to make their way to the Luton end, where a long shot was dispatched at Williams's charge. This proved unfruitful, as did another such effort a little later on, when McEwen cleared grandly. The attack was sustained by the visitors, who were exhibiting just such forcing tactics as had been expected from them. That their efforts were not devoid of method will be conceded when it is added to the clearances already described that McCartney was compelled to head away. Thereafter it was Luton's turn and delighted applause from the local supporters greeted a fine display by Ekins, whose centre was well-judged. It may be said that it afforded the defence

Incidentally it may be said that it afforded the some trouble. Gallacher took a leaf from the book of his comrade and had a try on his own account, the ball travelling just wide of the mark. The strangers, just to show that the Lutonians were not to have matters all their own way, returned to the attack and they must have scored had not McCartney succeeded in getting his head in the way of the ball. The corner which was thereby presented to the North Londoners was not improved upon, Docherty proving too agile for his antagonists and clearing in fine form. Once more the 'Spurs came down in force, only to see the ball go soaring over the bar from a heavy kick. Next was witnessed a long-sustained bout of long kicking, the backs on either side playing an important part in this portion of the operations. A misfortune happened to Luton hereabouts, Ekins falling when near goal and thus rendering it impossible for him to take advantage of a lovely header from his wing-mate. Galbraith was punished for an unnecessary foul, and the centre-man heightened his offence by missing a grand centre by Gallacher. Davies, who was surprising and delighting everybody by his brilliant play, was responsible for a gallant though unsuccessful effort to open the score for his club. The 'Spurs were justly penalised for a nasty foul on Docherty; the latter took the free-kick and sent in accurately, only to see the ball sent flying up the field. The 'Spurs could not be compelled to desist from their attacking tactics just yet, for soon afterwards they were at it again. The occasion was a foul by Coupar, the result of which was that McCartney was obliged to concede another corner in averting the downfall of his goal. The kick from the flag was not productive, and so the Luton sympathisers breathed freely once more. This is by no means a sample of "hifalutin," for the contest was so close that every time the visitors got within shooting range the home spectators became anxious. They appeared to realise the fact that though victory would not mean much to the 'Spurs, defeat would spell disaster to the Lutonians. The Luton players were obviously under the influence of this feeling also, for they were by no means playing up to form. They had done quite rightly in abandoning their customary style for the most part and adopting that of their opponents; but their combination was ragged and not to be depended upon. A change soon came over the scene, though, for again Ekins went off at full speed to the Tottenham end, where Galbraith missed narrowly. Another good effort by Luton was as unprofitable as any that had preceded it. Subsequently more excellent defence was credited to Luton, Davies clearing magnificently on one occasion. The Hotspurs were stopped for getting off-side and subsequently Clement sent in a shot which Williams cleared in marvellous fashion; the inside left man was adjudged to be off-side, however. Hands against the strangers and a foul against Galbraith were awarded, following which McCartney effected an excellent clearance. A couple of samples of foul play by the 'Spurs were duly visited with the displeasure of the referee, while Galbraith sustained a kick, though it was not sufficient to disable him. A further good effort by Docherty was neatly disposed of, and just after McCartney was pulled up for indulging in foul tactics close to the home goal. The free kick was well placed, and it was finely cleared, while in the next minute McEwen headed out splendidly. An unpleasant incident occurred at this stage. Newbigging and McEwen had not been on the best of terms for some time and hereabouts a collision occurred between them. It was averred by some that the centre forward struck "Mac"; but whether this was so or not could not be determined from the grand-stand. In the next minute, however, Mr. Saywell was observed remonstrating with the pair and the upshot was that the men shook hands and took up their accustomed positions. Ekins next received from Galbraith, only to over-run the ball at a critical stage. More rough play was witnessed from the 'Spurs and this was followed by another good centre by Luton. When in a good position Gallacher was heavily charged off the ball, while Davies steered over the line with a capital effort. McCartney got too far up the field, with the result that Payne was put off-side, and a like performance shortly after ended similarly. From a beautiful centre by Gallacher McInnes headed in, but Ambler was not to be caught napping. More useful work by Gallacher was noted, the goalkeeper keeping out one shot in particular with difficulty. McElhaney succeeded in getting past Docherty and sent in a first-rate shot, the ball finding its way above the bar. A further sample of excellence from Gallacher led to a strong attack by Luton, the visitors effecting a good clearance. Stewart sent wide with a long one. From this time to the interval the only points of interest were some free-kicks. No goals were notched, however, and so the midway positions were:

LUTON, 0; 'SPURS, 0.

In the second moiety the home combination had the wind in their favour. A foul throw against the Southern Leaguers led to McCartney sending in brilliantly, following which Stewart sent over the line with a good one. The score for Luton was thereafter opened, McInnes beating Ambler luckily. The left-winger dispatched a long, bumping shot at the Tottenham goal and Ambler, who handled the ball, allowed it to drop into the net. This success of the home arms was the signal for a great outburst of cheering from the home supporters, who had begun to get anxious. The London contingent consoled themselves as well as they could by observing that it was hard luck. It was not long before Luton added to their score. They were apparently stimulated considerably by their former success, and the result of some pretty passing was that McInnes steered the ball neatly past Ambler. This repeated lowering of the 'Spurs' colours was hailed with enthusiastic shouts by the Lutonians and McInnes was warmly congratulated by his fellow players. The homesters were now thoroughly at their ease and they played in vastly more taking style than previously, the outcome being that the game seemed quite at their mercy. It must not be supposed however, that the strangers were yet done with; far from that, they continued to play in plucky style, and it was not until time was nearly up that some Luton

admirers thought themselves justified in concluding that their favourites were out of the wood. Just after the second point had been notched by the home lot a further excellent centre was made with the result that McInnes almost succeeded in scoring again. McCartney mis-kicked and let Tottenham through; but Davies came to the rescue and cleared by sending into touch. McEwen headed out splendidly immediately, and in the next minute a good deal of surprise was caused by the referee giving Ekins off-side close to the Tottenham goal-line, this appearing to many to be a mistake. A further attack by Tottenham was witnessed, the leather going over the bar; it seemed that the custodian had touched it, for a corner was given. McCartney presented his adversaries with yet another corner. Williams a little later had to rush out to clear, while Gallacher experienced very hard luck, a tremendous shot from his toe striking an opponent instead of going into the goal. A good one by Stewart was cleverly negotiated by Ambler, and Burrows had no mercy on Ekins when that player got away. A first-rate attempt by Docherty was headed on by McInnes, though the latter was at once pulled up for being off-side. Montgomery, who had been displaying grand form, was punished for jumping, and after some excellent play on both sides McElhaney headed wide. A fine effort by Docherty was grandly dealt with by Ambler, and another burst by Ekins was lavishly applauded. The game continued to be closely contested until near the end, when Ekins centred so accurately that Gallacher had little difficulty in coaxing the ball into the net. This was all the scoring and amid intense enthusiasm Luton qualified to meet West Bromwich Albion next week with the following score:

LUTON, 3; 'SPURS, 0.