

## A GRAND STRUGGLE.

When Luton Town had qualified for the competition proper of the English Cup, and it was known that they had been drawn against West Bromwich Albion it was generally thought that they had extremely little chance of snatching a victory. There is no more formidable cup-fighting team in England than the famous "Throstles," and it was conceded that Luton was least fortunate of the Southern teams in regard to the draw. True, the locals were to have the advantage of ground, and that is no mean one. Still, it was thought by most folks that the best that could be hoped for was that the Luton players would make a gallant fight. There were some who were optimist enough to look for a triumph of the home arms; but these were the exceptions which proved the rule. The Luton players were sent away to No Man's Land last week, and here their training operations were watched carefully by Lawson. The men did not come into Luton until shortly before the time announced to start the match. The "Throstles," who had been training at Sutton Coldfield, travelled by way of London and North Western Railway on Saturday morning, and reached Luton a couple of hours before the start. Some disappointment was caused by the announcement that Bassett (the International outside right) would be prevented from playing by the opening of an old wound in his leg, while on Saturday it was ascertained that the old war-horse Horton would supersede Evans at right back, the latter having been suspended. It was not until the last minute that the authorities decided between McLeod and Dean for the vacancy caused by Bassett's inability to appear, when the former was awarded the position. The Lutonians were also unfortunate, for Ekins was debarred by illness from taking his customary position on the left wing. As events proved this was disastrous for the home club, for nobody could have done worse than Birch, and the probability is that Ekins would have performed infinitely better.

The excitement which had been noticeably increasing rapidly during the few days immediately preceding the great encounter rightly informed the committee that there would be a great gate. The weather was not particularly favourable; but enthusiasts recked not of that, for they turned out in thousands. Not only did Luton provide its full complement of spectators, but there were contingents from Dunstable, Leighton, St. Albans, and Hitchin, as well as from London and farther afield even than that. Upwards of half the seating space on the grand-stand was reserved and numbered, and no difficulty was experienced in disposing of these seats at an enhanced price of half-a-crown. It is scarcely necessary to say that the crowd was the biggest that has ever attended a football match in Luton. Half-an-hour before the start the ropes were thickly lined and the unreserved portion of the stand was crowded. Still hundreds came pouring in, and so great was the crush at the Dallow-lane gate at one period that the crowd broke in. It was stated, however, that most of those who succeeded in effecting an entrance were holders of tickets. Excitement was noticeable everywhere, and all were anxiously awaiting the turning out of the teams.

It is well to interpolate some observations here as to the condition of the ground. The heavy snow of the previous week was allowed to lie untouched until Friday, when the Corporation scraper and a number of carts and men were engaged to clear the pitch. This was expeditiously performed, but it was found that the turf was frost-bound and that in places the ice was plentiful. All would have been well, however, had not a downfall of rain accompanied a rapid thaw during Friday night and Saturday morning. The frozen surface was covered with water and though every effort was made to improve the conditions, little good resulted. The referee duly inspected the ground before the start and ruled that it was fit to play upon. When the men got to work, though, it became apparent that there was good reason for questioning Mr. Kingscott's decision. Play had been in progress only a few minutes when mud was churned up plentifully and the players became liberally bedaubed. The terrible state of the ground was all against correct football, and the exhibition which was given by both sides was surprisingly good under such circumstances.

The Lutonians were first to emerge from the pavilion and as they appeared in their striped uniforms they were loudly cheered. The "Throstles," who wore blue and white stripes, had no reason to complain of the warmth of their reception. Another delighted cheer was raised when it was discovered that the home captain had won the toss and had elected to play downhill with the wind in his favour. With fair punctuality the sides ranged up thus:—

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

*West Bromwich Albion*:—Goal, Reader; backs, Horton and Williams; half-backs, Perry, Higgins and Banks; forwards, McLeod and Flewitt (right), Cameron (centre), Richards and Watson (left).

Referee: Mr. A. G. Kingscott (Derby). Linesmen: Messrs. J. Carpenter (Leicester), and A. Davis (Marlow).

No sooner had Cameron kicked off than the homesters



Reference: Mr. A. G. Kingscott (Leicester), and A. Davis (Marlow).

No sooner had Cameron kicked off than the homesters gave a taste of their quality by making their way into the Albion confines. The stay was not of long duration just now, and at the other end Flewitt was perceived to shoot wide. Birch caused Reader to clear when the locals had returned to the Albions' end and Stewart just failed with an effort which went a bit wide of the mark. Coupar next tested Reader with a beauty which the custodian disposed of grandly, following which Birch was adjudged off-side right in front of goal. This was very unfortunate, for the homesters seemed to have a good chance of opening the scoring. Hands against the strangers looked dangerous. McEwen took the kick and managed to send the ball into the net, though without making it strike the necessary second player. An extremely fine run by Gallacher was duly admired; the outside right beat the great Williams with the utmost ease and the back had his revenge by bringing



Williams stops Gallacher.

him down nastily. This occurred not far from goal and why Mr. Kingscott did not award a penalty kick is not known to the writer. An ordinary free-kick was given from which Davies sent right over the bar. The Lutonians were delighting everybody by their show, for up to now they had more of the game than their opponents, whose defence was being very severely tested. The home forwards were exhibiting first-rate form and were a long way ahead of the Albion quintette. For some time the home lot managed to remain not far from the strangers' goal; but at length Williams and his comrades removed the scene of operations to mid-field. Some admirable heading on both sides having been duly applauded another foul was given against the Albion, this rendering it necessary for Williams to bestir himself, which the gallant back managed to do effectually, the outcome being that the ball found its way over the goal-line from a Lutonian's toe. Some tricky play by Coupar enabled that player to work his way down, the outcome being that Reader was called upon to dispose of a neat try from the foot of the inside right. The last-named was not deterred by his failure to lower the Albion colours, and in the next minute he had returned to the charge, though on this occasion he only managed to send behind the line. Docherty was penalised for a foul throw, and the free-kick enabled the Albion to attack hotly. In the midst of a big struggle Cameron shot hard and Williams only succeeded in keeping out the leather by conceding a corner. Docherty gave another corner immediately, this proving as unproductive as that which had preceded it. Tricky passing by the Albion and sound defence by Luton was next witnessed, and failures at short range were credited to Flewitt and McLeod in rapid succession. A foul against Luton did not long delay the progress of the homesters, for in a little while Gallacher was observed to send in a beauty, Reader kicking away neatly. The ball was pounced upon by McInnes, who shot so well that the leather struck the cross-bar and bounced over. Had the shot been a foot lower Reader could not possibly have saved it. More hard luck for Luton! The crowd audibly sighed, for they were anxiously awaiting the drawing of first blood. McLeod did not relish being pulled up by McEwen, apparently, for he kicked the sturdy little back and incurred the displeasure of the referee in consequence. Soon afterwards a dire misfortune happened to the Lutonians. Flewitt, who was standing in what to most present appeared to be an off-side position, profited by a mistake on the part of the home defence and dashed away at top speed towards Williams's charge. The homesters were so satisfied in their own minds that the whistle would blow that they ceased playing and even Williams made no effort to save when Flewitt sent into the net. The referee awarded a goal, to the amazement of all. There was no doubt in the minds of at least the local spectators that the decision was an error, and to know that the game was won by this extremely doubtful point does not bring feelings of satisfaction to residents hereabouts. Directly after the resumption Gallacher passed so accurately to Birch that the latter had a splendid opening. To the chagrin of all he missed execrably, though the chance was the easiest imaginable, whereat there was more disappointment. Hands against the Albion produced a corner to Luton and in the ensuing melee a "Throstle" was a trifle injured. Gallacher shot finely after the flag-kick, but the ball eventually went over the goal-line. Following a nasty foul on Gallacher by Banks, Davies once more sent through, though without result. McInnes gave Reader a hot one to deal with, the custodian catching it smartly, and in the next minute Williams gave a corner to Luton. This was not profitable and when the ball emerged from the press McCartney sent in capitally, Birch missing badly. A further corner accrued to Luton after some tricky play by Coupar, and the little right-winger headed wide when the ball was sent in neatly from the flag. A further excellent sample of play was given by Gallacher, who was giving Williams a deal of trouble, the back being hard put to at times to cope with his fleet adversary. McInnes was stopped for off-side, and during some close play along the line Docherty had his visage coated with mud, his eyes being filled with dirt. He presented such an appearance that the crowd could not refrain from laughing consumedly. Luton again got down, though only to kick over the line, and from a free-kick against the visitors for fouling McInnes Davies



Davies sent wide of the mark. Stewart gave a sample of his ability by robbing an opponent exceedingly smartly, while Galbraith made a mistake just after in finessing when he should have had a try at goal, the result being that he was deprived of the leather. Watson next got through and looked like scoring when McEwen jumped in and cleared magnificently, the little back measuring his length as the



McEwen clears from Watson.

result. At the other end Williams was loudly cheered for a couple of splendid clearances, the home forwards being especially dangerous just now. Hands against the Albion near goal looked ominous and the "Throstles'" citadel had a narrow escape of being captured. Good returns by both Luton backs were warmly cheered. The operations at this point were surprisingly fast considering the heavy state of the ground. Following a further foul on Gallacher McCartney sent in finely, though only to see the ball go over the line. When hands had been awarded against the visitors Stewart missed by a couple of yards, this being a particularly narrow escape for the Albions. A foul against the home captain was balanced by a foul throw against the "Throstles." McInnes had got well under weigh when he was tripped and a foul was given, Docherty steering just wide of the mark. This was all the events of importance prior to the interval, when the positions were:

WEST BROMWICH, 1; LUTON, 0.

Inasmuch as the locals had had the best of the exchanges up to half-time it was considered that they had a very good chance of scoring in the second portion, despite the fact that they had now to face the hill and the wind. Most of the men had made a change of garments. When West Bromwich had been pulled up for an infringement of the off-side law Davies was stopped for fouling. Galbraith failed to take advantage of a good centre by Gallacher. Stewart shot hard but the leather was headed away. Another narrow escape was experienced by the homesters, Watson being knocked off the ball in the nick of time by McEwen. Hands against West Bromwich was balanced by another foul against Davies, to whom the referee addressed some remarks. McInnes was adjudged off-side when he had passed to Galbraith, who beat Reader easily. As a matter of fact the point was no more off-side than that of the Albions. A foul against the leaders led to the home combination attacking vigorously, Horton eventually clearing well. Cameron missed with a long one. Coupar and Gallacher got away well and Gallacher centred splendidly, Birch ultimately managing to run the ball out when he should have scored. Coupar missed by very little. Richards got off well and sent into the net; but he was palpably off-side. McEwen effected a fine clearance and in a little while the locals were again at the opposition end, Stewart sending over the line in passing to Gallacher. Birch was credited with a farther horrible miss, while at the home end McEwen once more defended grandly. A particularly good centre by Docherty came to Gallacher who waited rather too long, the result being that he was prevented from scoring. A corner accrued to Luton; but this was fruitless. Birch once more failed to score, following which Reader came out to clear from two or three of the local forwards. The Bedfordshire men were again having the best of matters and nothing but execrable luck prevented them from breaking through. Williams during this period of pressure was ubiquitous and his exposition of back play was superb. Reader was also reliable. At the Luton end Williams had to run out in order to save. Fouls against either side were noted, following which Birch put in a good run and centred well, though without the desired result. McEwen was injured, though fortunately only slightly. Hereabouts Birch changed places with Galbraith and in the first minute afterwards he gave Reader a particularly hot one to deal with. Watson shot wide, and thereafter the homesters attacked very hotly from a free-kick, the ball almost being forced through. Hands fell against the Leaguers near goal and McCartney sent wide from the free-kick. Infractions of the rules were frequent, and the Albions indulged in a good deal of foul play, one foul on McCartney being especially bad. Luton attacked very strongly after this and nearly got through, the ball bobbing about in front of the goal in tantalising fashion. As the end drew near the homesters increased their efforts and the Albions, who were palpably wearing, were afforded a very warm time. At all points just now the locals were superior; but the long-desired goal would not come. It seemed as though the Albions' fortress was charmed, for try as they would the home players could not succeed in capturing it. A brilliant centre by Galbraith produced a great struggle and as the fight became keener the spectators waxed more excited. There was an almost continuous burst of cheering—and the locals deserved it all, for they were playing magnificently. In the last few minutes there was only one team in it, and though at the close the homesters had to admit defeat they were not by any means disgraced. The score at the finish was:

WEST BROMWICH, 1; LUTON, 0.



# WEST BROMWICH V. LUTON.

## IN MEMORIAM.

Lamented day, t'was yours, alas, to share  
Misfortune's bitter chalice, whilst in vain  
Strained energies, regardless of control,  
Prompted each movement towards the Bromwich  
goal.

Hotter grew the fight, and 'midst the din  
Strove "Brum" and "Straw" to die or win ;  
And all convulsed in muddy strife,  
Dissolv'd the throbbing nerves of Luton's life.

Sudden collapse rear'd its creeping form  
Out of the Albion's ranks and, like the midnight  
storm,

Crushed Luton's hope. Fate may the tale rehearse,  
One living doubt Luton will ever nurse.

Victors' triumph o'er, may Fortune guide your way  
To the high regions of victorious day.

Where referees impartial, fair to all,  
And opponents combating, list to the off-side call.

Misfortune's visits past, and men of Luton stand,

Firm-paced, renewed, resolving, hand in hand,  
For ever and for ever to play as hitherto,

Though fortune fights against you, victory your  
course pursue.

S. A. J., WEYMOUTH.



# FOOTBALL FACTS AND FANCIES

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When I boldly stated my belief that the Luton men would find it possible to defeat the famous cup-fighters against whom they were drawn a good many friends were prompt with cynical statements. The result has proved that my confidence was not misplaced, for though the locals did not, unfortunately, succeed in pulling off a victory they did the next best thing and proved themselves the superior team on the day's play.

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Oh, the pity of it! Here was fame and fortune resting in the balance, and the fates were once more arrayed against us. A win would have meant much for the Luton club, and that they did not obtain it is attributable to nothing but the execrable ill-fortune that seems to dog them in matches where anything important is at stake.

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Since Saturday I have been becoming more and more sensitive to disappointment and chagrin, for it was not until some time after the game finished that one began to realise how near the players had gone to breaking the record in the South at the expense of one of the half-dozen best cup teams in the country. There is, perhaps, no need for being despondent, for honour sits upon the local banners in consequence of the excellence of their show; but it is difficult to refrain from being sorrowful.

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The most pleasing feature of the game is that the Lutonians displayed better form than ever before. Gallantly as they struggled against "Proud Preston" a couple of seasons ago, on this occasion they eclipsed all previous performances and covered themselves with glory. For once in a way there is but one opinion being expressed—that the Lutonians played magnificently and succumbed only to hard luck.

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It was just a repetition of what happened when Millwall beat us early in the season, when Luton had most of the play and the Londoners could claim the balance of goals. On Saturday the "Throstles" were outplayed for the most part and yet they were able to boast of that irritating point which decided the matter.

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Dame Fortune frowned upon the Southrons from start to finish; never did she allow the glimmer of a smile to light upon those who assuredly deserved it. Talk of caprice! Why, the Albions did not in any sense show themselves worthy of securing a victory, and yet they obtained it. Such is the luck of some teams.

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It cannot be gainsaid that the state of the ground was in favour of Luton. The thaw and rain had combined to turn the pitch into a "slough of despond" wherein the players floundered hopelessly. How the locals succeeded in playing such excellent football amazed many besides myself. It is perfectly true to say that never has the ground been in such a terrible state.

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So bad was the condition of affairs in this regard, indeed, that a good deal of doubt was expressed as to whether the referee would decide that the match should rank as a cup-tie; but when he had made the customary inspection Mr. Kingscott did not take long to make up his mind.

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Just a word in passing as to the attendance. Of course it was a record. We do not, unhappily, get £185 gates every week. There must have been upwards of 7,000 persons present during the afternoon, and all were filled with enthusiasm. The receipts were considerably swelled by the sale of some 200 reserved seat tickets at 2s. 6d. each, while the charge for admission to the grand-stand was raised to a shilling for the occasion.



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A good deal of disappointment was occasioned by the abstention of Bassett, who had been injured in the previous week. Many were looking forward to seeing the International measure his capability with that of Decherty and McEwen, and not a few were confident that the locals would not come off second best.

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A good joke occurred before the game started. Some persons in plain clothes were observed kicking a football at the pavilion end of the ground, and one in particular attracted attention. One on-looker sapiently remarked that the personage knew something about football. Knew something! I should think he did. It was Bassett.



An easy save by Reader.

are his words addressed to me when the end was in sight: "Luton have had the best of it. I am surprised at their form. This team is a great deal better than most Second League teams. They play better football." Comment upon such a verdict is needless.

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One cannot attach much importance to promises made on such an occasion; but it may be well to say that some responsible persons connected with the "Throstles" tacitly consented to vote for the admission of Luton to the Second League next season. This may or may not be done; but it is becoming more and more clear to me that we stand an excellent chance of being included when the time comes. But this by the way.

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Let me say that the encomiums of the International right-winger found an echo with every judge of football present. Prominent supporters of the Albions frankly admitted that the Lutonians ran them too closely to be pleasant, and many strangers unconnected with either team were loud in their praises. To sum up, I would say on the day's play Luton were a good deal the better team.

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In saying so much let it not be imagined that I am foolish enough to suppose that the Lutonians would everywhere or at any time be a match for the Leaguers. At the same time the "Throstles" would never have an easy task if they had to meet the local "stripes," for the latter would in future bear in mind the time when they so nearly accomplished a performance which would have placed them on a high pinnacle.

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The most noteworthy feature of all this is to be found in the fact that nowhere has there been observable a word of depreciation of the Lutonians. All round has been heard the same chorus of praise, and the consolation has been tendered by Southerners that though defeated we were certainly not disgraced.

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All this emphasises the contention that the time has gone by when such a vast disparity between Northern and Southern teams could be justly pointed to. There has been a wonderful advance during the last few years, and if the South continues to progress in like ratio it will not be long before the South is found taking a much more prominent position in the Cup contest.

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At the risk of being accused of going off at a tangent I am going to indulge in some criticism, though I trust to be acquitted of the charge of importing harshness. My allusion is to the matter of the constitution of the home team. When I heard that Birch was to be included the idea struck me as absurd, and at the risk of being flouted by some who imagine that they are the only beings competent to pass judgment upon the abilities of a player I argue that the result proves my feeling to have been correct.

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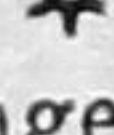
Why, it is palpably ludicrous on the face of it, and not fair to the man himself. Here were eleven men training for a week and at the last moment one of them has to give place to a player absolutely untrained,



strictly speaking. Surely never a more suicidal policy was adopted by a body of football managers, and I do not hesitate to say that its adoption was responsible for the loss of the match.



Let it be clearly understood that I am not hitting at the man. My feeling is that he did his best—little of use as that was—and that his apparent inferiority was attributable to the cause stated. That he made some awful mulls in front of goal is undeniable, and altogether it seems to me a great pity that he was put in such a false position. My information is that nobody was more keenly sensible of that position than was Birch, and I am heartily sorry for him.



On Monday a re-arrangement was tried, and the brilliant form which the quintette displayed on that day formed conclusive proof to my mind that that ought to have been the arrangement on Saturday. Finlayson played with Gallacher in the old style and he actually scored a beautiful goal. What would we not have given for that goal on Saturday!



Having uttered my growl, let me pass on to a far more agreeable topic—the show made by the ten men who had been in training. If anybody ventured to tell me that it was not first-class he would either tempt me to insult him or lead me to pity his ignorance. Not a man who saw what occurred will be found to deny the excellence of the play, and some who had not previously seen the team exhibit their prowess were astonished at their ability.



I am not going to let my delight carry me to the length of imagining that we are fit for the First League. There is a good deal to be learned before that can be truthfully said; but on Saturday's form no Second League side that I have seen this season—and we have beheld some of the best—could hold a candle to the locals. It is this reflection that has been by turns saddening and irritating me the week through.



Is it necessary to analyse the performances of the individuals who composed the sides? Perhaps some brief references will not pall upon readers. Frankly speaking I know not which of the Lutonians I would choose to wear the palm of merit, for all the trained men were on their best behaviour and all covered themselves with blushing honours and clinging mud.



Let us commence, then, with Williams. He made a mistake in not attempting to negotiate the shot which absolutely enabled the "Throstles" to enter the second round. I do not say that he could have kept it out; but he might at least have tried. It would not have mattered if the man had been off-side or not had he saved it. Apart from this defect he behaved splendidly and effected some neat saves.



McCartney greatly pleased me by keeping in subjection that unfortunate tendency of straying up the field. He kept his place and consequently displayed to advantage. "Mac" left no room for doubting his intentions when he charged an opponent, and his kicking was clean and scientific. Altogether he played a great game.



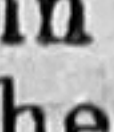
Though I deal with McEwen after his comrade it is not with the desire of rating him lower. I cannot say off-hand whether "Mac" made a mis-kick or not; but if he did it was not perceptible to me. The little man was to be found wherever there was hard work to be done, and he fully deserved all the praise that it is in one's power to bestow. He was cruelly treated more than once, and it delighted me to notice that he kept his temper admirably.



The downfall of McEwen.



The halves? Well, it is impossible for me to discriminate between them and such an invidious task will not be attempted by me. Captain Stewart was at his best, which is synonymous for saying that he played superbly. Docherty was not a whit inferior, while Davies displayed a judgment and resource that were intensely pleasing.



If there was one man in the forward rank who was more prominent than the others it was Gallacher. Averse as I am to anything that savours of "butter" I must say that Gallacher was the best forward on the field, and that he gave a magnificent exposition. Plucky and dashing as he was he was ever skilful, and had somebody else been on the left wing instead of Birch he could scarcely have failed to convert some of those swinging centres.





Galbraith, though not faultless, did extremely well for a man who was very closely watched, his passes to the wings being very clever at times. Coupar played with a great heart, and the way in which he went steadily on in the direction of Albion Williams was a treat to us all. McInnes was quite comfortable in the mud, and he played one of his very best games.

Before leaving the homesters let me remark that some of them were veritably bedaubed before the interval arrived. Docherty had his eyes bunged up while heading and others bore generous patches of dirt upon their clothes and visages. This did not seem to render them uncomfortable at all; but it was noted that when the interval arrived they lost no time in ridding themselves of their besmirched garments.

On the side of the winners one must give first place to Williams, who played a marvellous game. We had all anticipated a treat; but we were scarcely prepared for such a magnificent exhibition. Though he had all his work cut out to cope with the speedy forwards opposed to him, Williams managed to come out on top on most occasions, and it was solely due to his extraordinary cleverness that clearances were effected at times. He unworthily fouled Gallacher on one occasion and a penalty kick should have been awarded—but was not.

Reader was as firm as a rock in goal—and as imperturbable. Nothing seemed to flurry him, and in spite of the most determined rushes of the home forwards he was not to be caught napping. To say that his saves were admirable but faintly expresses what one would desire to convey. He is a great custodian and demeaned himself accordingly.

The halves played a fine game, though I cannot say that I thought them as good as the local trio, judged all round. Higgins in the centre was in splendid form, and he was ably supported.

The absence of Bassett necessarily weakened the front rank. McLeod pleased me most, while Flewitt was accountable for putting in some valuable work. His goal, though extremely doubtful, was smartly obtained. Watson more than once came within an ace of scoring.

Mr. Kingscott satisfied me on the whole, though his decisions on the off-side rule were not by any means pleasing occasionally. It is said that he was positive that Flewitt was not off-side when he scored; but from where I sat the player seemed yards off-side, and that seems to have been seen by thousands of other spectators. It was a great pity that a goal which should decide so important an encounter should be in any sense doubtful.

Amongst the host of favourable criticisms upon the display of the locals is one in the *Daily Chronicle* which is especially remarkable. The writer starts by saying: "Probably the most extraordinary of the Cup ties was that at Luton, where West Bromwich Albion just pulled through by a very doubtful goal, scored by Flewitt in the first half, to nil. The superiority of the Lutonians was always striking." The comment afterwards proceeds thus: "The South has had its chance, and lost. Nothing but astounding ill-luck prevented Luton winning. Time after time a player looked certain to score, but the ball could not be forced through." This is so utterly different from what we generally read in the *Chronicle* that it is worth mentioning.

"Linesman" had a particularly appreciative account in the *Morning Leader*, while the other daily papers all spoke in the highest terms of the plucky efforts made by the Lutonians. All of which is exceedingly satisfactory.

Splendidly as the men played on Saturday they did not show one whit of inferiority on Monday, when they succeeded in knocking Kettering out of their own Charity Cup competition. As a prefatory observation I should say that the "Ketts." were weakened by the absence of some players who had on Saturday experienced the gentleness of the Newton Heathens.

The front rank on the home side was constituted as it should have been on Saturday, and everybody was charmed with the dashing style in which the men played. Weak spot there was none, and the men combined in first-rate fashion. Galbraith was out of his usual place in the centre, having taken outside left by way of a change.

The locals soon took the measure of their adversaries, and the furious bombardment of the strangers' goal which was witnessed prior to the interval conclusively showed that the Lutonians intended making a bold bid for victory. So excellently did the homesters shape, indeed, that there was only one team in it, and it was remarked that on such form the Lutonians were good enough for most sides—League or otherwise.

The ground was still in a shocking state, and the mystery was how the players managed to get about at all. They did not seem very greatly distressed by their turn at mud-larking, however, and so far as the victors were concerned it appeared that they did not unduly exert themselves in the second half.

It was in this period that the Kettering champions aroused themselves and struggled gallantly to retrieve their lost laurels. But the effort came too late; indeed, it is certain that had they fought never so strenuously from the outset the result would have been just about the same. When they had once scored, though, the Midland Leaguers gave us a far more pleasing sample of what they can do.

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strictly speaking. Surely never a more suicidal policy was adopted by a body of football managers, and I do not hesitate to say that its adoption was responsible for the loss of the match.

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Having uttered my growl, let me pass on to a far more agreeable topic—the show made by the ten men who had been in training. If anybody ventured to tell me that it was not first-class he would either tempt me to insult him or lead me to pity his ignorance. Not a man who saw what occurred will be found to deny the excellence of the play, and some who had not previously seen the team exhibit their prowess were astonished at their ability.

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I am not going to let my delight carry me to the length of imagining that we are fit for the First League. There is a good deal to be learned before that can be truthfully said; but on Saturday's form no Second League side that I have seen this season—and we have beheld some of the best—could hold a candle to the locals. It is this reflection that has been by turns saddening and irritating me the week through.

★

Is it necessary to analyse the performances of the individuals who composed the sides? Perhaps some brief references will not pall upon readers. Frankly speaking I know not which of the Lutonians I would choose to wear the palm of merit, for all the trained men were on their best behaviour and all covered themselves with blushing honours and clinging mud.

★

Let us commence, then, with Williams. He made a mistake in not attempting to negotiate the shot which absolutely enabled the "Throstles" to enter the second round. I do not say that he could have kept it out; but he might at least have tried. It would not have mattered if the man had been off-side or not had he saved it. Apart from this defect he behaved splendidly and effected some neat saves.

★

McCartney greatly pleased me by keeping in subjection that unfortunate tendency of straying up the field. He kept his place and consequently displayed to advantage. "Mac" left no room for doubting his intentions when he charged an opponent, and his kicking was clean and scientific. Altogether he played a great game.

★

Though I deal with McEwen after his comrade it is not with the desire of rating him lower. I cannot say off-hand whether "Mac" made a mis-kick or not; but



The downfall of McEwen.

if he did it was not perceptible to me. The little man was to be found wherever there was hard work to be done, and he fully deserved all the praise that it is in one's power to bestow. He was cruelly treated more than once, and it delighted me to notice that he kept his temper admirably.

★

The halves? Well, it is impossible for me to discriminate between them and such an invidious task will not be attempted by me. Captain Stewart was at his best, which is synonymous for saying that he played superbly. Docherty was not a whit inferior, while Davies displayed a judgment and resource that were intensely pleasing.

★



Davies displayed a judgment and resource that were intensely pleasing.

★

If there was one man in the forward rank who was more prominent than the others it was Gallacher. Averse as I am to anything that savours of "butter" I must say that Gallacher was the best forward on the field, and that he gave a magnificent exposition. Plucky and dashing as he was he was ever skilful, and had somebody else been on the left wing instead of Birch he could scarcely have failed to convert some of those swinging centres.

★

Galbraith, though not faultless, did extremely well for a man who was very closely watched, his passes to the wings being very clever at times. Coupar played with a great heart, and the way in which he went steadily on in the direction of Albion Williams was a treat to us all. McInnes was quite comfortable in the mud, and he played one of his very best games.

★

Before leaving the homesters let me remark that some of them were veritably bedaubed before the interval arrived. Docherty had his eyes bunged up while heading and others bore generous patches of dirt upon their clothes and visages. This did not seem to render them uncomfortable at all; but it was noted that when the interval arrived they lost no time in ridding themselves of their besmirched garments.

★

On the side of the winners one must give first place to Williams, who played a marvellous game. We had all anticipated a treat; but we were scarcely prepared for such a magnificent exhibition. Though he had all his work cut out to cope with the speedy forwards opposed to him, Williams managed to come out on top on most occasions, and it was solely due to his extraordinary cleverness that clearances were effected at times. He unworthily fouled Gallacher on one occasion and a penalty kick should have been awarded—but was not.

★

Reader was as firm as a rock in goal—and as imperturbable. Nothing seemed to flurry him, and in spite of the most determined rushes of the home forwards he was not to be caught napping. To say that his saves were admirable but faintly expresses what one would desire to convey. He is a great custodian and demeaned himself accordingly.

★

The halves played a fine game, though I cannot say that I thought them as good as the local trio, judged all round. Higgins in the centre was in splendid form, and he was ably supported.

★

The absence of Bassett necessarily weakened the front rank. McLeod pleased me most, while Flewitt was accountable for putting in some valuable work. His goal, though extremely doubtful, was smartly obtained. Watson more than once came within an ace of scoring.

★

Mr. Kingscott satisfied me on the whole, though his decisions on the off-side rule were not by any means pleasing occasionally. It is said that he was positive that Flewitt was not off-side when he scored; but from where I sat the player seemed yards off-side, and that seems to have been seen by thousands of other spectators. It was a great pity that a goal which should decide so important an encounter should be in any sense doubtful.

★

Amongst the host of favourable criticisms upon the display of the locals is one in the *Daily Chronicle* which is especially remarkable. The writer starts by saying: "Probably the most extraordinary of the Cup ties was that at Luton, where West Bromwich Albion just pulled through by a very doubtful goal, scored by Flewitt in the first half, to nil. The superiority of the Lutonians was always striking." The comment afterwards proceeds thus: "The South has had its chance, and lost. Nothing but astounding ill-luck prevented Luton winning. Time after time a player looked certain to score, but the ball could not be forced through." This is so utterly different from what we generally read in the *Chronicle* that it is worth mentioning.

★

"Linesman" had a particularly appreciative account in the *Morning Leader*, while the other daily papers all spoke in the highest terms of the plucky efforts made by the Lutonians. All of which is exceedingly satisfactory.

★

Splendidly as the men played on Saturday they did not show one whit of inferiority on Monday, when they succeeded in knocking Kettering out of their own Charity Cup competition. As a prefatory observation I should say that the "Ketts." were weakened by the absence of some players who had on Saturday experienced the gentleness of the Newton Heathens.

★

The front rank on the home side was constituted as it should have been on Saturday, and everybody was charmed with the dashing style in which the men played. Weak spot there was none, and the men combined in first-rate fashion. Galbraith was out of his usual place in the centre, having taken outside left by way of a change.

★

The locals soon took the measure of their adversaries, and the furious bombardment of the strangers' goal which was witnessed prior to the interval conclusively showed that the Lutonians intended making a bold bid for victory. So excellently did the homesters shape, indeed, that there was only one team in it, and it was remarked that on such form the Lutonians were good enough for most sides—League or otherwise.

★

The ground was still in a shocking state, and the mystery was how the players managed to get about at all. They did not seem very greatly distressed by their turn at mud-larking, however, and so far as the victors were concerned it appeared that they did not unduly exert themselves in the second half.

★

It was in this period that the Kettering champions aroused themselves and struggled gallantly to retrieve their lost laurels. But the effort came too late; indeed, it is certain that had they fought never so strenuously from the outset the result would have been just about the same. When they had once scored, though, the Midland Leaguers gave us a far more pleasing sample of what they can do.

★

I do not know whether we are justified in taking the score as representing the difference between the teams.



Personally I do not think it is a fair indication. There is no doubt that the Lutonians have advanced wonderfully during the last season ; but still I cannot think that they are three clear goals better than Kettering.

★

So far as Monday's match is concerned all the locals were prominent at times, and I do not intend to discriminate between them. In every instance the allusion would have to be laudatory, and the men must take the will for the deed and accept praise all round in the lump.

★

We are now in the semi-final of the Kettering Cup, and are due to meet either Leicester Fosse or Burton Wanderers on February 15. The second semi-final is between Walsall and Rushden, and is fixed for March 1. The final is to be played on March 22. Both semi-finals and the final are decided at Kettering.

★

This is not the first time that the Lutonians have journeyed to Kettering on a like errand ; but if they succeed in winning the cup it will be a new thing. I remember some very finely fought games in the past, and did space permit one might indulge in reminiscences. However, all that need be said just now is that there seems a fair prospect of the Lutonians securing the cup. Having been disappointed of the English Cup some consolation will come to the players should they capture both the Kettering and Luton Cups—and I think they will.

★

The match to-morrow is with Burton Wanderers, and the result ought to be a win for Luton.

★

On Saturday Wellingborough and Tottenham Hotspur met in the United League at Wellingborough, when a draw of two all resulted.

★

The United League table on Monday stood thus :—

|              |         |      |      |       |      |       |     | Goals |  |  |
|--------------|---------|------|------|-------|------|-------|-----|-------|--|--|
|              | Played. | Won. | Drn. | Lost. | For. | Agst. | Pts |       |  |  |
| Arsenal      | 9       | 5    | 2    | 2     | 20   | 19    | 12  |       |  |  |
| Rushden      | 9       | 5    | 1    | 3     | 20   | 21    | 11  |       |  |  |
| Millwall     | 6       | 4    | 1    | 1     | 19   | 14    | 9   |       |  |  |
| Loughboro'   | 6       | 3    | 1    | 2     | 18   | 12    | 7   |       |  |  |
| Wellingboro' | 9       | 2    | 2    | 5     | 14   | 24    | 6   |       |  |  |
| Kettering    | 7       | 1    | 3    | 3     | 11   | 12    | 5   |       |  |  |
| Luton        | 4       | 1    | 1    | 2     | 12   | 8     | 3   |       |  |  |
| Tottenham    | 4       | 0    | 1    | 3     | 8    | 12    | 1   |       |  |  |

★

The record of the Lutonians is now as follows :— Played, 43 ; won, 30 ; lost, 7 ; drawn, 6 ; goals for 153, against 41.

★

The *Echo* on Saturday had the following comparison :—“ Millwall Athletic possess a capital goal average, 141 for and but 59 against, having won 27 of their 41 engagements. Luton Town is better than this, however. Goal average 149 to 39, and 29 won out of 41 played.”

★

With Luton eliminated and Millwall vanquished the hopes of the South turned to Southampton St. Mary's, and the sea-port men have behaved nobly. After drawing with Heanor at home the Southerners journeyed into the Midlands on Wednesday and won by a goal to none. For which hearty congratulations. Southampton will be at home to Newton Heath in the second round.

★

The draw for the second round resulted thus on Wednesday night :—Everton v. Bury, Sunderland v. Notts Forests, Blackburn Rovers v. Wolverhampton Wanderers, Preston North End v. Stoke, Derby County v. Grimsby Town or Bolton Wanderers, Southampton St. Mary's v. Newton Heath, West Bromwich Albion v. Liverpool, and Aston Villa v. Notts County. Ties to be played on Saturday, February 13. The first-named club, in each instance, to have choice of ground. It will be noticed that the “Throstles” have the advantage of playing at home against Liverpool.

★

The action of the selection committee for the international game to be played between England and Ireland have shown appreciation of the play of Williams (of West Bromwich) by choosing him to partner W. J. Oakley at back. Bassett appears with Bloomer on the right wing, and the team all round is very strong.

FOOTER.