

(CREDITABLE WIN FOR LUTON.

Dealing with the probability of the Hotspurs beating Chatham, a writer in the *Daily Telegraph* on Saturday belittled the chances of the latter by saying that they "began by losing to Watford—a promoted club—and since then have only beaten Luton, who promise to do little better in the Southern League than they did in the second division of the Championship." Such was this critic's estimate of the match between Bristol City and Luton that he did not think well even to mention it, an omission which may fairly be construed as indicating the thought that Luton had no chance. Following upon the wretched display given by the Lutonians at Chatham in the previous week, it was not surprising to discover that the general idea in Luton was that the Bristolians would just about manage to win, though at the same time it was hoped that a change that had been made in the constitution of the home side would be effectual. The weather on Saturday was delightfully fine and this fact, combined with the fame of the Bristol team, attracted a very large crowd to the Dunstable-road ground. The home players wore for the first time their new uniform of pale blue shirts and white knickers. Burbage (the Hertford player who was included in the Luton ranks occasionally last season) was introduced at centre forward in the place of Molyneux.

At 4 o'clock Mr. J. C. King took command of the following sides:—

Luton: Smart; Lindsay and McCurdy; Clifford, Holdstock and Williams; Brown and Blessington; Burbage, Tierney and Saxton.

Bristol: Toone; Bach and Davis; Jones, Wilson and Chambers; Nicoll and Stevenson, Michael, Fulton and McDougall.

The locals obtained choice of ends and defended the railway goal. Soon after Michael had set the ball rolling "Roland" Brown distinguished himself by smart play at outside right and was warmly applauded. A good centre by Brown was neatly cleared by Toone. Following a foul by Bristol, Holdstock steered over the bar. The Luton left wingers were next conspicuous, though nothing came of the effort. The homesters had up to now had the best of matters and were giving a capital display. The "Cits." then roused themselves and the forwards put in some really excellent work. So determined was the attack that the visitors got close to goal, where Lindsay headed away. Clifford was next to the fore, and he broke up the combination of the Bristolians in very good style. Burbage got away with a rush later on, only to be adjudged off-side. A free-kick for handling checked the homesters for a space; but subsequently the "blues" attacked hotly once more, though only to find that the Bristol defence was very sound. Brown broke away capitally; yet he wound up by sending wide of the mark. Burbage with another of his dangerous dashes forced a corner, which proved resultless. The home outside right once more attracted attention by very fine play, while Tierney evoked applause with a shot which went hard and straight towards goal. Toone was on the alert, though, and succeeded in disposing of the ball. The Luton contingent were continuing to have the best of matters, and had their shooting been more accurate they would have scored on more occasions than one. Another corner was secured, from which Tierney headed wide. Brown followed this up by shooting into the custodian's hands. The outside man, by the way, was being splendidly fed by Blessington, whose unselfish display was vastly admired. Fouls were awarded against both sets of rivals in turn. One of the Luton defenders and a visiting forward collided and wound up by kicking each other, the referee eventually interposing. Afterwards Bristol got away well on the left wing and concluded by shooting very wide. Immediately after a grand effort from the same wing was neutralised by Lindsay, who dashed in and headed away cleverly. The Luton captain, indeed, was showing the crowd—and, incidentally, his opponents—what admirable judgment he possesses. There was no hesitancy with him. Like Colonel John Hay's hero "Jim Bludso," he quickly recognised his duty "and went for it thar and then." Smart elicited warm approval by bringing off a first-rate save, while a minute or so later he was again cheered for an equally satisfactory performance. The local custodian was giving a very gratifying exhibition and it was pleasing to observe that the spectators expressed their approbation in no stinted fashion. When McDougall had scraped the bar with a hard shot, Smart again preserved his charge. The Bristol forwards were just now giving a capital sample of their quality, and they very nearly succeeded in scoring. Michael was especially prominent, and what he lacked in inches he made up for in pluck. He was clever and fearless and gave the home rearguard some trouble. On one occasion he rushed off at a great pace towards the Luton goal and took a shy, which Smart managed to clear. Saxton sent the ball yards above the Bristol bar soon after. Brown and Clifford shot neatly in rapid succession, Wilson following suit for the strangers. The backs on both sides put in some splendid volleying, though it did not prove very effective in the sense of making openings. A flag-kick to Luton was rendered unfruitful by Brown kicking behind the line. Towards the end of the first half the home players advanced in force and indulged in a stubborn assault. They were eventually driven back by a free-kick for fouling. A further corner was not taken advantage of, Brown once more steering erratically. At the interval the positions still were:

LUTON, 0 ; BRISTOL, 0.

Just after the resumption Lindsay put himself in evidence on two or three occasions and his dash was invariably successful. Receiving from Brown, Burbage shot well, a corner following. Again the "blues" attacked and looked dangerous, Burbage sending in well. It seemed that this shot would most likely have

scored ; but another forward who was standing in an off-side situation got in the way and so the chance was spoiled. The downfall of the Bristol goal was not long delayed, however. Burbage received a clever pass from Brown and, going ahead at a great pace, beat Toone with a lovely shot. This success for the homesters, which occurred 10 minutes from the re-start, was productive of jubilant shouts. In the operations which took place immediately afterwards Lindsay played a great game, and Holdstock also was prominent repeatedly. Later on Bristol attacked very sturdily and the play was at the Luton end for some time. When close to goal Burbage was unfortunate enough to be pulled up for off-side. Blessington dispatched a grand shot at Toone's charge, which was just as excellently saved. Lindsay brought off a superb clearance. A slight suspension was necessitated by a mishap to Burbage ; but happily it proved to be nothing very serious. Free-kicks against both sides followed on the resumption, and from one of these danger came to Luton, the visitors winding up by shooting over the bar. Brown got well under weigh and finished up a typical run with a shot, which missed scoring by inches only. Burbage, who had not recovered altogether from his accident, got clear nicely when a good distance from goal, and set off at the top of his speed. He was pursued by the backs and Toone endeavoured to cope with him ; but the home centre man managed to elude his assailants, and he terminated a splendid exhibition by scoring in brilliant style. This point rendered a victory for Luton almost a certainty, and there was a very enthusiastic outburst from the onlookers. As the end drew near the visitors redoubled their efforts, and at one stage Smart brought off a capital save. A corner to Luton was the last point of interest in the game, and when the whistle sounded the home side had gained a highly creditable victory with these figures :

LUTON, 2 ; BRISTOL, 0.

The winners were loudly cheered on returning to the dressing-rooms and Burbage was carried thither on the shoulders of a number of ardent admirers.

FOOTBALL FACTS AND FANCIES.

There was great jubilation in Luton after Saturday's match, and justifiably so. It was a splendid performance to lower the colours of Bristol City. It came as a great surprise, after the far from satisfactory way in which the men had shaped in the previous week at Chatham.

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It was not in any sense a fluke. The triumph was won by the display of ability superior all round to that of the visitors, who had been looked upon as one of the strongest combinations in the Southern League. The success bears out the impression I formed on the occasion of the Southampton match—that the newcomers would shake down into a formidable combination before long.

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Ere proceeding to further comment let me say that there must be a very pronounced improvement on the left wing. The men who played there on Saturday were far from being as dashing and dangerous as we had been led to hope in the practice games that they would be. Saxton was especially weak on Saturday. When compared with the display on the right wing, that of the left wingers was like a candle to an arc lamp for brilliancy.

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Here let me utter a word or two of appreciation of the way in which Blessington is combining with Brown. The inside man watches and feeds his comrade with that unselfishness without which successful forward play is impossible. The result is that the pair are a big handful for any backs.

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Another player who is deserving of commendation is Holdstock, for his first-rate exhibition at centre-half. It affords me unqualified pleasure to pay this tribute to the local man, and it leads to the thought that the directors have a reserve team from which drafts can be made into the senior ranks as circumstances may require.

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It would be unfair to make these pleasant allusions and to leave Lindsay out. He displayed splendid judgment and always did the right thing. His dashing charges were not altogether relished by some of those who were floored. Lindsay is an ideal captain and just the man to nerve his companions and lead them from victory to victory—that is, if the men have the ability that I believe they possess.

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Smart, too, is entitled to more than passing reference. He surprised us all by the coolness with which he dealt with the hottest of shots. His display could scarcely have been excelled even by Robinson himself, for he did all that was required of him, and in a workmanlike way.

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Burbage, of course, was the hero of the day. This local player appeared in the Luton ranks last season occasionally and he substituted for Molyneux on Saturday. He fully justified his inclusion, for he scored the two goals by which his side won and gave a display that secured the admiration of everybody present.

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The centre man is a dashing, clever player something of the Donaldson type. Once he gets away he takes a deal of stopping, as International Bach and his companions discovered. His second goal was a beauty, and it was rendered additionally meritorious by his having sustained an injury.

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The experiment of standing down a player who does not give satisfaction is sometimes risky ; but the success of Burbage on Saturday proves that the authorities have good material at their disposal and should embolden them in their resolve to stand no nonsense. Better lose with reserves than with well paid men who either will not or cannot play.

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Of course in saying so much I am not referring specifically to Molyneux. I would say precisely the same thing of the left wingers or any of the other players who do not afford satisfaction. We have had far too much of the other kind of thing in the past.

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To speak broadly of Saturday's game, I should unhesitatingly say that the Bristolians could not have been at their best. Considering the reputation they have secured, I could not help wondering at the slackness which was frequently perceptible.

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In the first half of the match the home lot were distinctly the better side, though flashes of brilliancy from the "reds'" forwards relieved the display of the visitors at times. That there was no score at half-time was due more to the ill luck experienced by Luton than to any especial cleverness on the part of the strangers.

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The second half proved to a demonstration that our conclusions of the first half were correct. The locals went great guns after they had scored, though even then the Bristol men were not by any means done with, and it was not until after Burbage beat Toone a second time that the result was certain.

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Michael, the City centre forward, was a hard worker and his very pertinacity entitled him to better luck than he obtained—though at the same time due allowance must be made for the careful way in which he was watched. Nicoll, the old Millwallian, was not in very great form.

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The Bristol halves were a very fair trio, though there was nothing very brilliant about them. Bach was by far the better of the two backs, while Toone did well in goal.

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On the home side, in addition to those already specially mentioned, Clifford and McCurdy deserve a word of recognition. The former is settling down, and he will prove a valuable member of the half-back line. I have seen Williams play a far better game.

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There was much outcry with reference to some of the decisions of the official in charge of the game. It was difficult at times to agree with the referee's rulings ; but there was never anything very serious the matter.

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There was a good attendance and the gate realised just over £70.

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The League table after Saturday's games stood as follows :—

	Played	Won.	Lost.	Dr'n.	Goals For	Goals Agst	Pts
Portsmouth	3	3	0	0	5	2	6
Bristol Rovers	3	2	0	1	6	3	5
Reading	3	2	0	1	6	2	5
Millwall	3	2	1	0	6	2	4
West Ham United	3	2	1	0	10	3	4
Bristol City	3	2	1	0	7	3	4
Watford	3	1	1	1	4	8	3
Tottenham Hotspur	2	1	1	0	5	3	3
Southampton	2	1	1	0	4	5	2
Queen's P'k Rangers	3	1	2	0	8	6	2
Luton	3	1	2	0	5	6	2
Kettering	3	1	2	0	3	6	2
Chatham	3	1	2	0	3	7	2
New Brompton	3	0	2	1	3	5	1
Swindon Town	3	0	2	1	2	9	1
Gravesend	3	0	2	1	2	10	1

The Southern League games on Saturday were:—

♣Tottenham Hotspur	... 5	bt Chatham	... 0
♣West Ham United	... 2	bt Southampton	... 0
♣Luton	... 2	bt Bristol City	... 0
♣Bristol Rovers	... 3	bt Kettering	... 1
♣Watford	... 1	dr Swindon	... 1
♣New Brompton	... 1	dr Gravesend	... 1
♣Portsmouth	... 1	bt Millwall Athletic	... 0
♣Reading	... 3	bt Queen's Park Rangers	0

♣ indicates home clubs.

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The "blues"—for the Lutonians now sport light blue shirts—are down to visit Swindon on Saturday. The Westerners have not yet won a game, and the fact that they could only draw at Watford does not make them out very great. It would not surprise me to see the visitors advance up the League ladder.

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By the way, Roger Ord is to accompany the team as goalkeeper. Ord will be remembered as the custodian who played some marvellous games for the Arsenal some years since.

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"Rover," writing in the *Morning Leader* on Monday, said: "The surprise of the day was the defeat of Bristol City at Luton. It was commonly supposed, and with good reason, that the City team were one of the strongest in the League. On recent form the same could certainly not be said of Luton, who had been beaten on their own ground by Southampton and at Chatham by the team of that name. It was therefore a genuine 'startler' when the news came over the wire that Luton had defeated Bristol City by 2 goals to nil. What ho, my brave Chickaleery! The victory will give Luton a fresh lease of life. There is nothing succeeds like success in the football world. Nor can it do the Bristol Baby much harm. He is a lusty youngster who hardly knows his own strength, and perhaps he rather underestimated the prowess of the Bedford team."

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The *Daily Chronicle* says: "Luton accomplished a really good performance in defeating Bristol City. The Strawplaiters have discovered a new forward named Burbage, and he scored the goals!"

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"Abaris," writing in the *Echo* on Monday, referred to the defeat of the Arsenal by Burton Swifts and proceeded: "Hardly less surprising than this last was the tumble of Bristol City at Luton. There we have another hot lot of forwards who can not set the ball. The City, however, should be able to take this defeat smiling and still make headway. Luton will find the points very acceptable, and the encouragement resulting from their capture inestimable."

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The annual meeting of shareholders of the Club on Monday evening was a very formal affair and there was a surprisingly small attendance. The statements made as to the playing season and the condition of the finances added nothing to the information already in the possession of readers.

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The disorderly behaviour of a section of the crowd was discussed and the conclusion arrived at was that the only remedy was to prosecute some of the offenders. So many references have been made in these columns to the subject without result that I am persuaded that mere remonstrances are of no avail.

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It was conceded by one of the Directors that the crowd "is not an ideal one." Not by any means. It has been made clear recently that unless stern repressive measures are adopted the Club will be brought into trouble—and that by a set of raving yahoos whose ignorance is only matched by their blatant black-guardism.

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The referee

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Saturday produced a case in point. The referee found it necessary to address some observations to Lindsay more than once. The yelling section determined at once that the home captain was being accused of foul play, whereas the remonstrance and warning were for indulging in dirty language. Yet the referee had to put up with a hostile demonstration! Such is the way of some football crowds.

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I very much regret to have to state that the directors of the Town Club have had this week to deal with a very serious matter which intimately concerns several of the prominent players. It is very hard luck indeed, and is all the more depressing when it is borne in mind that we had been congratulating ourselves upon having secured the services of good and reputable men.

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The directors have not only my sincere sympathy but my hearty commendation for having dealt sternly with the offenders. They have let it be known that a repetition of such discreditable conduct will entail the sternest dealing with the culprits. The football-loving public will agree that such repressive measures were not only excusable but absolutely essential if discipline is to be maintained.

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So far as can be gathered, it seems that the affair originated in the precipitate departure on Monday of Tierney, who had apparently taken offence at something and accordingly packed himself off bag and baggage. Incidentally one would say that the Club is well quit of a player with such a temperament.

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The departure was celebrated by the proffer of intoxicants to some of his fellow professionals. The matter did not stop here, for some of the men continued their imbibing, and the story goes that some very discreditable events happened in the evening. Certain it is that several of the players were seen in the town in a more or less pronounced condition of intoxication. It would not serve any useful purpose to go further into details.

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The directors appear to have regarded as most serious the case of Molyneux. This player was suspended *sine die*, and informed that he could have a free transfer if he could secure another engagement. It is a thousand pities that such severity had to be resorted to; but the officials had no alternative.

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In the case of Saxton a suspension for a week was imposed. Another of the men was at first similarly dealt with; but on his giving a solemn pledge that such conduct should not be repeated he was let off with a stern reprimand. Two others of the men were smartly censured.

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The whole of the delinquents were told very plainly that any repetition of the offence would be severely visited and that no further warnings would be given. One cannot wonder that the directors have resolved upon this. The mystery has been that they have stood so much in the past. We are persuaded that the public will endorse the actions with their approval.

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Of course the suspensions and the departure of Tierney have dislocated the team, and the directors are placed in a very awkward position, for there is a Southern League match at Swindon to be decided on Saturday. There was some talk of Fletcher being engaged; but he has signed on for Grimsby.

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There is nothing for it but to engage reserves. It is hard luck; but the football lovers of the town will understand how it has come about if Luton should lose, and will not be unduly cast down. It were better to employ a team of reserves and lose games than put up with such disreputable behaviour on the part of the players. It is to be hoped, however, that lovers of the game will not be influenced by the unhappy events of the last few days.

FOOTER.