

FOOTBALL NOTES AND NEWS.

By "Grasshopper."

THE ENGLISH CUP.

LUTON v. SUNDERLAND.

A GOOD GAME.

The exhibition given on the Ivy-road ground on Saturday afternoon will for a long time rank high in the local football world. In their respective Leagues Luton and Sunderland occupy about similar positions; though no doubt on form the Northerners have a little the best of it. The fact that this was the first time Luton had ever got as far as the second round in the Cup competition, and that it is many years since we had a real class Cup game at home, engendered anticipations of an overcrowded gate. Many enthusiasts were speculating on at least 13,000 spectators being present; but just before the game started the seats in front of the grand stand were but sparsely filled, and the field was not lined so thickly as the locals expected. When the official figures were published, giving the gate at 10,533, there was a little disappointment; but for all that, out of the gross takings of £571, the finances of the Club, so far as this year's expenses are concerned, should be put on a fairly satisfactory basis.

It was unfortunate that during almost the last few hours, Luton were compelled to rearrange their team. At the practice match over-night, in what was practically his last shot, Warner again sprained the cartilage of his leg, so that it was utterly impossible to include him in the side. After a shuffling, and then a re-shuffling on the morning of the match, the right wing was made up of Murphy and Gittins, with Fitzpatrick partnering Barnes on the other wing. It had been rumoured that F. Hawkes had been attacked with influenza and would not be able to play; but the local man not only turned out, but gave a very fine display in the field.

On taking the field both teams looked in the pink of condition. The first impression one got of Sunderland was that they are the heaviest team that has been on the local ground for several seasons; they have not only got the weight, collectively and individually, but they also possess the height. Naturally the teams met with an enthusiastic reception. There was one thing about Luton—they looked as if they were going to win; there was no funking this time. The visitors, too, were in the best of spirits; but neither side appeared anxious to hold the other too cheaply.

"Bob" won the spin of the coin, and though it meant playing against the sun, he set Sunderland to kick against a moderately strong breeze. The Northerners were the first to open the attack, bearing down on Platt's charge with rare tact and judgment; but nothing resulted, and the venue of play was quickly transferred. As in so many of their games, Luton lost the match in the very early stages of the game. A beautiful shot came right across the goal mouth from the left wing, and though Murphy was well up, sad to say, the effort went a-begging. That was the moment when Luton really missed Warner. Afterwards, with the exception, perhaps, of once, the "Blues" never had anything like a chance.

The game proceeded in ding-dong fashion right through. Now it was Luton who were aggressive, and then it was Sunderland who were testing the strength of the home backs. Play was very fast, and brimful of interest. Indeed, it was a grand game, the like of which we have not seen here for a long time. In the first 45 minutes it was a case of Jack being as good as his master. In the second moiety, however, Sunderland had perhaps rather more of the play, but they were not able to find the net. As a matter of fact, it was a great defensive game right through. During the whole afternoon neither goalkeeper was busy. The forwards of one team were constantly trying conclusions with the backs of the other, and vice-versa; but the defence on either side was impregnable, and the points of interest took place in mid-field.

A draw of "no score" was an excellent finish to a superbly fine game, and gave Luton the further advantage of a trip to Durham for the re-play. Sunderland possess a nice string of forwards, but there was little shooting done, simply on account of the fact that the home backs were always on the alert. The visitors also carefully watched "Sandy," never once giving the centre-forward an "earthly."

Saturday's game was not a cup-tie fight, so far as play was concerned—it was football pure and simple; and the dash, rush, and fouls associated with Cup matches were conspicuously absent. Sunderland showed what sportsmen they are, and how they can play the game, and fouls were few and certainly none were of a serious nature. However, it was a little due to the skill and tact of Referee Mason (of Burslem) that such a surpassing exhibition was made more than possible.

Result: Luton, no goals, Sunderland ditto.