

Football Notes.

By "THE GOALIE."

SOUTHERN LEAGUE.

LUTON'S CHECK.

PROMOTION PROSPECTS NOT SERIOUSLY AFFECTED.

MID-RHONDDA'S AMBITIONS.

For the last few weeks I have had the pleasure of recording the success of Luton, and a loss of points by one or more of their rivals. On Saturday the position was reversed. Croydon, Brentford, and Stoke all annexed two points, but Luton only succeeded in gaining one. This partial check is not serious, however, as the Strawplaiters had the hardest task of the day in visiting Mid-Rhondda. If the Mushrooms had succeeded in taking the two points—as their most ardent supporters expected—the Strawplaiters' hitherto rosy prospects of promotion would have been seriously jeopardised, if not altogether lost. Luton had, on paper form, little to fear, for when the Mushrooms journeyed to the Bedfordshire town some few months ago it was to meet with decisive defeat, Luton scoring no fewer than eight goals to one. But that victory was gained under exceptional circumstances, at a time when the Mid-Rhondda quintette were decidedly below form and in a match in which the visitors were sadly handicapped by mishap, which rendered McCallan, their sterling half-back, virtually a passenger for nearly the whole of the ninety minutes' play. There was, too, a strong feeling on the part of the losers that four of the victors' goals were from offside movements. Since then the Mushrooms' quintette have improved beyond recognition, and with a strong eleven in the field it was felt that victory might well be with the home side on Saturday. Luton, bent on struggling for the coveted first division, were also strongly represented.

The result—a draw—was not unexpected locally, and was received with a considerable amount of relief. One writer goes so far as to say that it makes promotion certain, but he must have lost sight of the difficulties that still confront the Blues. Luton are still four points ahead of Brentford, however, the London team having a game in hand. The Bees had an easy task on Saturday, and the visit of Aberystwyth gave them a 5-0 victory. Stoke entertained Newport and won by two clear goals, while Croydon visited Treharris, who succumbed by 3-0. The surprise of the day was the defeat of Swansea at Barry by 2-1, and whatever chance the Swans had has now entirely vanished. The Welsh team have therefore little to fight for when they visit Luton to-morrow (Saturday), and the match should make the Blues safe. Aberdare surprised Mardy by winning by 2-0, but it is quite possible that, with Caerphilly and Treharris, they will not compete in the Southern League next season. These three teams would be well advised to have a rest and take stock, and the prevalent feeling in Wales is that this is what will happen. It would not be surprising to see Pontypridd, or Mid-Rhondda, or both, with Swansea, making a bold bid for promotion next season, and it is certain that the English clubs who have to compete will find even stronger opposition in Wales than at present.

Saturday's game at Mid-Rhondda was a splendid one. In only one department of play did Laton excel, and that was in finish, says the "Daily Express." In concerted action the home quintette were as good as the visitors, while in the intermediate line and in defence the home players were superior. Laton did not score more than once because of the good work of Main and Bain at back and Ward in goal, but the fact that the "Mushrooms" did not defeat Mitchell more than once is not only due to good work by Elvey and Robinson, but to the hesitancy of the home forwards. The wing work of the forwards and halves was delightful to watch. Durran and Hoar, the extreme forwards of Laton, were very smart, but the latter missed one golden opportunity in the first half when he received the ball from the opposite wing and had only the goalkeeper to beat. The visitors were one goal up at half-time, a point which was most deserved if only as a fitting reward for the pretty bit of combination which preceded it. Every forward had a hand in the movement, but Frith, the centre half, finished it off. How many times the home goalkeeper prevented similar movements being successfully terminated it would be hard to say. Twice Ward went down to the feet of Simms and took the ball practically off his toes. Copestake and Evans were speedy and clever on the home wings, and some of the triangular work between Copestake, Collier, and McCullum was neatly executed. The second half was a repetition of the first, but with the one difference that the home team scored quite as deserving a goal as the one obtained by their opponents. Dai Evans finished off good work by putting in a low shot which defeated Mitchell all the way. The work of the halves on both sides had a lot to do with keeping down the score, and while McCullum, Garmichael and Cross were very effective, the Laton halves spoiled their endeavours by the use of tactics requiring the whistle. Result:—

MID-RHONDDA 1, LATON 1.