

FOOTBALL.

SOUTHERN LEAGUE.

ENCOURAGING VICTORY AGAINST PLYMOUTH.

After their creditable draw at Southampton, Luton's encouraging victory against Plymouth Argyle on Saturday should give the team that confidence which is so necessary to success and which enabled them to wind up last season so triumphantly. Plymouth are one of the strongest teams in the Southern League, and consequently their visit to Luton attracted the excellent gate of eight thousand, the takings being about £170. The attendance included well over a thousand Territorials, who provided splashes of khaki on the various slopes and terraces. Luton had the same team that drew at Southampton, and Plymouth had practically the same men who took them to fifth place on the table last season. They are a heavy team and will do better when they get soft ground to play on. As it was they showed themselves to be a more brainy team than Luton but the latter were more forceful in front of goal and had more scoring chances. As a matter of fact Luton had five gilt-edged chances, to Plymouth's two.

The first goal came very early in the game. Wileman took the ball to the goal line and centred right in front of Horne, the Plymouth custodian. Rollinson tried a shot but the ball struck Horne, and from the rebound Hoar easily found the net. Just before that Kirkpatrick, the visitor's outside right, retired with a broken nose, and for the rest of the game Plymouth had only ten men. Perhaps under these circumstances their tactics of playing for offside were excusable, but it spoilt the game as a spectacle. While Plymouth must be given credit for putting Luton offside very cleverly, it must also be admitted that the home forwards were very easy victims. They seemed to have no idea how to cope with the trap, except Hoar and Rollinson, who always kept behind the ball. The other men would dash forward and wait for a pass in a position that was so palpably offside that it was remarkable how it could deceive them. No further goals came in the first half, but after the interval, Luton increased their lead through Wileman, who took advantage of the partial clearance of a shot by Simms. Plymouth then reduced the deficit through Raymond, a misunderstanding between Mitchell and Fred Hawkes giving him an open goal.

Luton thus won by two goals to one, and on the run of play and the scoring chances they thoroughly deserved to. Plymouth's handicap robbed the encounter of any value as a test as far as Luton was concerned, but it seemed to show that the team promises to do well. Both Hoar and Roberts, especially the former, are evidently forwards who can be relied upon to keep the others plied with good centres, and if Simms and company can only find their shooting form of last season the "goals for" column should have a very respectable appearance. It was only two phenomenal saves by Horne that prevented a larger score on Saturday, and the Plymouth defence is supposed to be one of the best in the League. At half-back Luton will no doubt benefit by the return of Bob Hawkes. Frith played a splendid spoiling game at centre-half, but the outstanding man in defence was Elvey, who saved the team in the nick of time on many occasions. It was this that caused Mitchell to have little to do compared with Horne, and whatever experiments may be made with the Luton defence the ex-Clarence man will probably be a certainty.