

# FOOTBALL.

## Southern League.

### THE SAME OLD STORY.

#### MISSED CHANCES BRING DEFEAT.

"I hope you have to report a victory this afternoon," said an occupant of the Press-box at the Luton football ground on Saturday to the writer. Not being a partisan the latter was not so enthusiastic, but he replied that he hoped so too, because he was becoming bored with the monotony of telling of defeat after defeat. The worst of it is, it is always the same old tale, and one is strongly tempted to write a stock report and use it week after week, merely altering the names. It is impossible to wax eloquent on defeats, and perhaps it would not be a bad plan to adopt the practice of some of the belligerents in the war, and say nothing at all about them. Unfortunately it is out of the question to follow the Teutonic example of turning reverses into victories, because of the tell-tale League table, and so, to be very candid, the writer has indulged in the above digression, because it leaves less to be said of the match. It is sheer cowardice, of course, but pardonable.

If both Exeter and Luton had accepted all their reasonable chances on Saturday, Luton would have won, so it is quite logical to attribute the defeat to missed opportunities. There is something more serious than this, however, and that is that one of the most important links is weak. As a line the halves were not capable of holding even the moderate Exeter forwards, and the amount of support Luton's forwards received from the centre half was almost negligible. For his strength in attack alone, Johnson should be the first choice for centre-half—unless he is shortly required to fill another position where there are also at present serious shortcomings. Then again the forwards possess only one wing forward—Roberts—who can take the ball up the field and feel tolerably certain of landing it in front of goal, and the lack of opportunism on the part of the inside men has become too serious to be regarded as a temporary failing. Knowing what the men can do, and have done, in the goal-scoring, one is chary of suggesting new experiments, but the Directors certainly might try Johnson in case place in the forward line where no experiment has been made at the time of writing.

Luton should have crossed over with a lead of at least two goals. The best attempt to score was made by Rollinson, who, receiving a surprise pass just in front of goal, tried a first-time shot which was too straight. Another hard shot by the same player curled over the top of the goal, and a minute or so afterwards the ball rapidly passed to Simms, via Roberts and Rollinson, and the centre-forward sent in a lightning shot which the goalkeeper managed to divert for a corner by a desperate thrust of his arm. The easiest chance of all was made through a centre from the right, and the inside forwards had the ball to themselves in front of goal. In his excitement, however, Simms seemed to fall on it and a general muddle ensued, which ended in favour of the defence. The last incident of the first half was provided by the Exeter outside left, who sent in a terrific shot which struck the post. The game had been restarted only about three minutes when Goodwin scored for Exeter from a centre by Holt, but this did not discourage Luton so much as a bad miss by Roe, who, with an open goal, struck the upright. They certainly played desperately for a few minutes, but when nothing came of their efforts they fell away, and with a further goal for Exeter by Goodwin the game was as good as over, the visitors eventually winning by two goals to nil.