

FOOTBALL NOTES.

LUTON'S FALL TO THE PALACE.

We had a severe lesson on Saturday. Crystal Palace's 4-1 victory must have taught us not to bubble over by a victory gained away, however large the margin. We all remember the debacle when Merthyr came and trounced the "Blues" by 4-0 in the second match in September, but the side was then a peculiar combination, and had barely tasted the joy of victory. Now it was very different on Saturday. We had a full-size team out, and although in these days we are getting accustomed to other queer displays by home teams, we do not relish thrashings for the Town at Luton. I am going to say that while the Palace deserved their victory, the "Blues" certainly did not merit so crushing a reverse. He would have been a bold prophet who could have said the Palace would win before the end of an hour's play. Till then the Town had more than a fair share of the game. They were quite as good as the "Glaziers" so far as pressing goes, although every one must admit that the methods of the visitors were more attractive and impressive. That third goal, however, did place the issue pretty safe, and the fourth left absolutely no room for doubt.

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Of course, we were flattered by Tomlinson's goal in the first minute, and it then appeared that we should make our goal average balance, but after this momentary shakiness the Palace defence never wavered, and were usually too good for the Town's attacking force. Pressing as the "Blues" did, one might have expected more shooting, and with the greasy conditions, and a keeper who had shown that he was prone to take risks, that was the proper game. The Town players have often said that on heavy grounds they would do better, and up to a point I thought they would, but the failure to sling the ball about negatived their hopes. The Palace forwards were far more crafty in this respect. For long spells their wingers would be idle, then the ball was driven out suddenly, and one of them would be careering along the touch line at great speed. Both Bateman and Whibley brought danger when they got on the move, and the quintette were always open to have a shot when there was a chance.

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The "Blues" did not deserve, on the run of the play, to be down at the interval, but Dick Elvey made one of his few mistakes, and Smith took advantage of it, while Barber's goal which gave the lead was a very fine shot, and there was nothing from the home forwards to compare with it. It was straight, and those who did not perceive the curious flight, thought Summers should have saved it, but it swerved tremendously as it approached its extreme altitude, and Summers' effort to parry it was quite hopeless. The third goal came after a long bout of pressure by Luton. A big punt by Little, a speedy rush by Bateman, who was unmarked, and Summers was beaten. The fourth goal was the result of a snap shot by Connor, and from thence the Palace were always the better side, and Summers was busy to the end.

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I have talked to many judges of the game since the match, and all are loth to attribute any individual failure on the Town side. The sum and substance of it all was that on the day's form, the Palace were superior in practically every department. There was more cry but less wool about the game—a lot of labour without reward, because the players as a whole did not adopt the best game under the conditions. Personally, I do not think the team will play better on heavy grounds. I prefer to see them on an average ground, and under quiet conditions. The defence was never safe after Dick's error, and he appeared uncertain himself. The halves were useful, but had the fastest forward line they have yet had to meet, and I thought Rutherford was the best, although he found recovery difficult on the heavy ground. The forward line was not so forceful in the second half, and did not maintain the level reached in the first quarter of an hour. They worked very well in that period, and I thought they would give us another Northampton result. Williams and Simms were the pick, but Tomlinson was a hard worker. Sid Hoar was disappointing, but he was quite as much in need of rest as was Bookman, while Roe did not give as good a game as on the previous Saturday.

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The Palace forwards were brilliant at times, but better still, the team was sound, with the exception of Alderson, who took too many risks. Little was the best back on the field, and quite overshadowed his partner. Feebury was the cleverest half, but the line got through a lot of good work. The forwards were very hot, Barber shining. He brought brains into play, and quiet little taps or swinging passes initiated many a raid. Smith was very good, but quite babyish in disposition, and might well have been sent off for his cheek. The wingers were very speedy, and centred and shot with accuracy.

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There is no occasion to lose heart. The best thing is to take it cheerfully, and hope for a win on Saturday at Southend.

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Result:

CRYSTAL PALACE		4 goals.
LUTON TOWN		1 "

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The teams were:—

Luton Town.—Summers; Elvey and Dunn; Urwin, Rutherford and Parker; Roe, Tomlinson, Simms, Williams and Hoar.

Crystal Palace.—Alderson; Little and Rhodes; Cracknell, Hughes and Feebury; Bateman, Conner, Smith, Barber and Whibley.

Referee: Mr. J. A. Proctor, Trentham Hall, Staffordshire.