

FOOTBALL

THE LEAGUE—DIV. III.

A BRIGHTENING-UP AT BRIGHTON.

LUTON TOWN'S SMART PERFORMANCE.

(By CRUSADER.)

At Brighton.

BRIGHTON & HOVE ALBION 1
LUTON TOWN 1

BRIGHTON.—Hayes; Thompson, Feo-
bury; Bentley, Coomber, Woodhouse;
Nightingale, Fuller, Doran, Neil, March.

LUTON.—Bailey; Lennon, Tirrell;
Stephenson, Walker, Millar; Bassett, Hig-
ginbotham, Reid, Butcher, Hoar.

Referee.—Mr. W. E. Greenland, London.

It is extremely probable that we took all the confidence with us to Brighton on Saturday. General opinion expressed the view that we were in for the season's thrashing at Hove, for with two half-backs and an international forward suspended, another international nursing an injured leg, one of the substitutes a boy of eighteen years, who was playing in junior football six weeks ago, Sid Hoar in the throes of influenza, and practically all the players having to wear new boots, there did not seem much prospect of avoiding defeat. When the teams turned out and it was seen that Brighton had a much bigger side and their strongest eleven was fielded, our chances appeared more meagre still. The home team appeared much more powerful and framed more like the "professors" of the game. And while people were very sympathetic over the Town's recent misfortunes, they pointed out that Brighton could not afford to do other than win as handsomely as possible. One of my telegraph messengers reminded me that it was time Brighton gave Luton a licking, and they had chosen this beautiful day for that purpose. The optimism came unstuck. We came away with a point, and they could not grudge us our due.

Play was never of a high standard from the team aspect, but all the players were

WILLING WORKERS,

and deficiency in skill was counterbalanced by earnestness. And in comparing the merits of the teams it may at once be said that while the Albion had the more experienced side, the Town players refused to be beaten by experience, and contested every inch of ground and all right to possession from the first to the last sound of the whistle. There were not many incidents of an unpleasant character, but that was not the fault of the crowd, for, true to their reputation, they kept up a continual stream of abuse of Town players. The homesters, however, were the more robust side, and they used their weight unsparingly, especially Coomber and the backs.

The Albion were the better side in the opening stages, but as the minutes passed our lads began to get accustomed to each other, and by the second half they had improved wonderfully, and with a bit of luck in this moiety they might very well have won.

The first goal, scored by DORAN from a penalty, was hotly disputed by the Town team and officials. There was no apparent danger when the alleged offence was committed. Puller tried to side step Tirrell, but the latter blocked and got the ball, and the forward went over in the penalty area, although when Tirrell played the ball he was a foot on the centre side of the penalty line. The referee pointed to the spot, however, and the goal was duly registered. The Town's equalising goal came from Bassett, and in this instance a penalty should have been awarded to the Town, for Butcher was tripped in the area very near to the goal-line. The referee was well down the field, and he placed the ball on the line for a free kick. Hoar lobbed it nicely over a crowd of players, and BASSETT came on it like a shot and banged it into the net before the defence were aware of what had happened. It was a well won goal, and from that point the Town never lost a grip of the game, but continued to improve, and in the second half, even if Hayes were not so severely tested as Bailey, it was only because the Town forwards were lacking in shooting power.

In departmental work the Town defence carried off the honours. Bailey had not a lot to do, but he made

NO MISTAKE

at all, and at least three of his saves were of a sensational character. How he got to the ball on one occasion in the first half was a wonderful instance of anticipation and agility, and he astounded Doran by the manner in which he negotiated that worthy's shots. Lennon and Tirrell were superb, and alike in kicking and tackling they were always sure and strong, never flurried, and never both beaten by a combined movement of the opposition. They "paired" as well as ever they have done, and nothing seemed to come amiss. Of the halves Walker was the cleverest. Occasionally he allowed Doran too much latitude, but he realised that the Irish International was slow-footed, and with the exception of shots from long range, Doran could do little effective work against the Scot. In the second half especially, Walker shone, his shrewd tackling being varied by periodical dribbling and planning that puzzled the hefty opposition, and so admirable was his side-stepping and feinting in one little spell that I began to wonder how he would fare as a centre-forward. Stephenson is not as successful at half as he is at back, and in the first portion he was often beaten by the Neil-March combination, but he came along in the second half, and he did a lot of good work. Millar thoroughly justified his inclusion. Like the other deputies, he did not at once jump into his stride, but before the interval he was playing with rare nerve and judgment, and at times helped his forwards along with useful passes.

It would be absurd to say that the forward line was satisfactory: it would be very unjust to withhold a liberal meed of praise. To begin with, young Reid was making his

debut in a class much higher than he has previously experienced. Against him he found a big raw-boned Coomber, a man of long practice and tousy method. Reid did not see much of the ball for some time, because he found that Coomber anticipated him, and when it was a case of equal chance for the possession, the big man's weight was the deciding factor. So we had no line advance in the best sense of the word in the first half, but Reid learned a lot in thirty minutes, and in the second half he was not only quicker himself, but he swished the ball out to the wings at the right moment, and he lost no time in tackling backs and goalkeeper, and on two occasions he

NEARLY GOT THROUGH

by his speed in tackling Hayes. A month's experience would make a vast difference to the youngster, and one thing that pleased me immensely was the encouragement he received from his colleagues. If he were a couple of inches taller he would probably find little difficulty in retaining his position—at least for a substantial trial period. It was asking a lot of him on Saturday, but we were all convinced that he has great possibilities, and if he can grow fast during the next six months, he will probably solve a difficult problem for the Town directors. A word now for Sid Hoar. That he was quite unfit to turn out was obvious, for he was suffering symptoms that indicated the "flu." Before the finish he was quite done, but he made several dangerous raids, and on two occasions he nearly got through on his own, and occasionally he gave Millar assistance in dealing with a nippy pair. Butcher did a lot of dribbling that brought much danger to the Albion goal, but lacked the happy finishing touch. Higginbotham was the strongest figure in the line, and it was his presence that kept the Albion defenders' methods nearer the respectable than would otherwise have been the case. On two occasions he was unlucky in front of goal. None did better than Bassett, and if any man deserved the honour of scoring he did. His runs and centres were the best football shown by the line.

The Albion probably run Brentford and Southampton close for the distinction of being the biggest team in the Division. Backs, halves, and inside forwards are all strongly-built fellows. They never scrupled to use their weight, often very unfairly, and unnecessarily, and if any man deserved a caution it was Feebury, for the manner in which he laid out Bassett when the latter had beaten him. Thompson tried, but failed to catch Hoar in the same way, and Coomber and Bentley were similarly disposed. Coomber and Higginbotham had many clashes, on one or two occasions of an unpleasant character, and the Luton supporters—a highly respectable little band—were severe on the referee for his latitude in the handling of players. Once when Doran had been outwitted by Walker he gave a free-kick against the latter, who was badly tripped. Feebury, Coomber, Nell, and March were the most effective of the Albion players. Doran's display was very moderate. He was very slow, and his only dangerous threat in the second half was a shot from long range when he sent the ball over the bar. In fact, in this half, young Reid compared favourably with the Irish International.

There were not more than 6,000 spectators at the start, but before half-time the number was nearer 10,000.

UNINTERESTING FOOTBALL.

Brighton and Luton Put Up a Poor Show.

Luton..... 1 Brighton..... 1

There was very little to enthuse over in the game between the Albion and Luton, which took place at Brighton owing to the recent fire on the Luton ground. Suspensions and accidents caused four alterations in the visiting side, and this had a lot to do with the mediocre display.

Led by Doran, Brighton started off in dashing style, for when the Irish international was brought down in the penalty area and then safely landed the ball in the net they looked all over a winning side. However, ten minutes later Bassett equalized from a free kick just outside the penalty area, and after that Brighton appeared to have shot their bolt. The second half was uninteresting and pointless.

Brighton: Hayes; Thompson, Feebery; Woodhouse, Cromber, Bentley; Nightingale, Fuller, Doran, Nell, March.

Luton: Bailey; Lennon, Tirrell; Stephenson, Walker, Miller; Bassett, Higginbotham, Reid, Butcher, Hoar.