

LUTON MASTER MERTHYR.

Luton Town's best team was out. The same players have comprised the side before, but they have never been such a good team. The game was a contest between organised skill and willing effort, for no team ever played with better heart than did Merthyr Town. Let so much be said of them. They, I daresay, will have a burning desire on Saturday to show that they are capable of far better things than they gave last Saturday. Not a big side, yet possessed of plenty of energy and industry, with here and there exponents of considerable skill, they were not such a smooth-working instrument as Luton, and they were fortunate to escape with a deficit as light as three goals.

The most satisfactory feature of the game from the Luton standpoint was the manner in which possession was utilised. Nearly always the Town were able to make considerable headway, and the method was of no stereotyped character, in fact it was the variety of method that puzzled and tired the "Martyrs." A little tap here, a swinging pass there, a sudden swift dribble or a strong individual rush, and the Merthyr defenders were fretted exceedingly. But there was very little peevishness, and, in sharp and pleasant contrast to some games we have seen, no dirty play. The "incidents" could be counted on one hand, and on two occasions the referee kind of forged an offence, for in two cases neither act nor intention was harmful. The game was very different indeed from that when Merthyr visited Luton last season. I hope that Luton's visit to Merthyr will be in equally happy contrast to the game

also played at Merthyr. Of course, there were many changes in the side as compared with last season. There was a brand new defence, two changes in the middle line, and, writing from memory, three changes in the forward line. And these changes made for cleanliness, too. There were only two changes in the Town side, Jack Lamb and Butcher being out, but no one could imagine Jack Lamb's absence making all the difference between a pleasant and a disagreeable game. No, the main improvement was due to the change in the Welsh side.

Before the Town opened the scoring, they had proved themselves capable of much better things than Merthyr, and it was only the clever and sometimes lucky goalkeeping of Jones that delayed the goal. Simms, Mathieson and Bookman might well have scored without discredit to Jones before MATHIESON successfully applied his head to a well-timed centre from Hoar, and the ball went right away from Jones, who made a gallant effort.

There were many more thrilling moments for the "Martyrs" before the whistle sounded the interval, but the second half was barely ten minutes old before HIGGINBOTHAM scored with a characteristic effort. Luton had been dangerous for some minutes, but Merthyr's pluck was not exhausted, when the ball was wandering in front of goal with three or four of the "Martyrs" within easy reach, but Higginbotham stole a march on them. He suddenly rushed between the backs and crashed the ball into the net while the Merthyr men looked reproachfully at each other. SIMMS had never ceased trying, but Jones always managed to get in the right spot, though when his goal came from a corner kick, won and placed by Bookman, Jones was left helpless, for Simms nodded the ball down and it entered the net by the side of the post. There were a few more stirring scenes in the Merthyr territory, but the Town slackened appreciably, and appeared content with their lead. On several occasions Mathieson fiddled about when Bookman and Simms were waiting for passes. The visitors tried desperately hard to get a goal, and some claim that they succeeded when Beel shot in out of Bailey's reach, but Tirrell had fallen back into goal and headed clear. Many who were close at hand contend that the ball was through before Tirrell's head touched it. But Merthyr retired goalless.

Bailey had almost a holiday; Lennon was in splendid fettle, and Tirrell played with his customary judgment in spite of symptoms of throat trouble that kept him in bed on Sunday and Monday. The halves dominated the game. Walker played his best to date, and not only got through a pile of work, but did it cleverly. Roe was about equal, and his understanding with Mathieson and Bookman is developing in a manner that will make the left flank a much more dangerous instrument than it was in the opening stages of the campaign. Molyneux shows steady improvement, and when comes the rain that he has been hoping for so long, he will be all happy again. The forwards for the greater part of the game, worked with wonderful verve and precision, and Bookman showed us what he is capable of when he can get the ball favourably served up. His runs and centres were more frequent, and as dangerous, than for a long time past. Mathieson attended to his partner's wants. His dribbling was brilliant until it was overdone, and his shooting very powerful. Simms distributed and shot well, and should have had more than one goal. Higginbotham and Hoar played very well indeed. Sid is doing great things, and Bookman, the International, was in something like International form.

LUTON TOWN 3 Goals
MERTHYR TOWN Nil
LUTON TOWN.--Bailey; Lennon, Tirrell; Molyneux, Walker, Roe; Hoar, Higginbotham, Simms, Mathieson, Bookman.
MERTHYR TOWN.--Jones; Langford, Jackson; Brown, Poole, Crowe; Williams, Turner, Beale, Foxall, Nicholas.
Referee: Mr. J. Tolfree, Southampton.