

THE LEAGUE—DIV. III.

SWANSEA SURPRISED.

Luton Bring a Point From Wales.

(SPECIALLY WRITTEN FOR THE
"PICTORIAL.")

SWANSEA TOWN 1 goal

LUTON TOWN 1 "

SWANSEA TOWN.—Crumley; Robson, Milne; Williams, Collins, M'Callum; Hole, Jones, Beynon, Brown, Spottiswoode.

LUTON TOWN.—Bailey; Lennon, Tirrell; Molyneux, Walker, Roe; Bassett, Butcher, Mathieson, Higginbotham, Hoar.

Referee: Mr. J. F. Pearson, Crews.

Few clubs are more heartily welcomed at the Welsh port than are Luton Town, and although there was a great struggle under the handling code at Swansea, there were nearly 15,000 spectators to see the finest game we have had at Swansea this season. Luton's victory the previous week had whetted the enthusiasm of the Swansea Soccerites, and had kindled in the breasts of the "Swans" themselves a keen desire to be revenged for the defeat sustained at Luton, and they felt that they were deserving of something better than a three goals deficit. The friendly spirit of the players did not affect their determination to win, and every man of the two and twenty put all his energy and enthusiasm into his work. Occasionally there was a little friction, but on the whole the players conducted themselves well, and everybody was pleased that the referee took so manly a view of the worst incident of the game—the little fracas between Butcher and McCallum. No useful purpose will be served by extended reference to the affair, but following a collision in which M'Callum went down, both players "framed up," and the best course after the pacific word was that of the handshake, which the players readily undertook, and there was no further cause for interference.

It was apparent from the start that we were in for a really fine game, for both goalkeepers were tested early on, and Luton might well have opened the scoring before the game was five minutes old had not Brown fallen to the rear and helped the defence to deal with the second of a brace of corner-kicks. Then Swansea had a stroke of luck, for following an attack on the Luton goal, there was a little crowd in the goal area, when the ball rebounded to HOLE, who shot hard in. The ball passed between several players and glanced off Tirrell's foot into the net, the Luton captain being as surprised as was Bailey, who had positioned himself, and would probably have seen the ball out but for the accident. Swansea profited by this to such an extent that the Luton defence had a very harassed time, but never got rattled, and gradually asserted a mastery over the skilful attack. Lennon gave a heroic display in this period, and his speed and sure kicking were much praised, while Tirrell's work was very sound when Roe left him anything to do. As the game wore on Luton made headway, and had Mathieson been capable of finishing off his remarkable footwork with decently-placed shots Luton would have led at the interval. Once he was only a fraction of a second later than Robson when the ball was practically begging for someone to kick it into the net, and Crumley was helplessly looking on. So the interval arrived with Luton a goal behind.

Swansea began as they had left off, but Luton seemed to have had some sort of new inspiration during the "breather," and they went for goal at a surprising pace. It was during this warm attack that the incident between Butcher and McCallum arose, and Swansea did not get over it quickly enough. A free-kick was well-placed by Molyneux, and a scrimmage ensued in the home goal, in which Butcher and BASSETT were prominent, and the latter managed to tap the ball past Crumley, who was helpless.

It was now Swansea's turn to quake, for the visiting forwards, urged on by determined middle men, assailed the home goal time and again, and only the stubborn front put on by the home backs staved off defeat. Then in the concluding stages Luton's defence underwent a repetition of its experience of the previous week, and the Swansea forwards attacked time after time, but always, always, always there was a Luton man in close attendance to the men who wanted to shoot, and so Bailey was not beaten again, and Luton may be said to have thoroughly earned their point.

All things considered, therefore, Luton may well be satisfied with the point they brought away. Swansea are not a particularly great side, judging from the League table, but despite their several failures in away games—they have yet to win an away match—their performances on their own midden have entitled them to be viewed with respect. They opened on Saturday in hurricane fashion, displayed remarkable vigour and pertinacity of purpose, and before the Strawplaiters had quite settled down Hole had been credited with a goal. During the seven minutes from when the ball was set in motion Lennon, Tirrell and Bailey had precious little time to take stock of the position. A frenzied Welsh crowd of 15,000 spectators egged their favourites on to greater deeds, and for a time the Luton citadel was in dire peril, although, as subsequent events proved, the "Swans" were very poor stuff in front of the net. They always looked like doing things—and invariably failed at crucial moments. Some twenty minutes had elapsed before the situation dawned on the spectators and on the Luton defence—Swansea Town were all right up to a point.

Gradually the Bedfordshire men evened up matters, and when the interval came it was clear that a repetition of last week's brilliance would give Luton the spoils. Five minutes after the interval a free-kick was given against the "Swans" on the touch-line just forty yards out, and from it there was a sorry melee in front

of Crumley's charge, the goalie only partially saving and sending the leather in the direction of Bassett, who promptly snapped up the opportunity. The fact that both goals came from extreme wing men does not suggest especially brilliance in either vanguard. Perhaps the keen defences had much to do with the keeping down of the score, but, nevertheless, Mathieson and Higginbotham had chances of placing the issue beyond doubt for Luton, whilst Beynon mulled a few opportunities for the Welshmen. Butcher once sent in a great shot which the home goalie did not see, but which went just wide of the net. The cohesive work of the Luton forwards was delightful to watch, the more particularly sparking work coming from the Hoar-Higginbotham flank. Mathieson did not inspire as a line leader, although some of his juggling was marvellous. Butcher and Bassett, notably the former, performed well. Walker was apt too often to go for the man rather than the ball, and this alone marred a great display at centre-half. Throughout quarter was never asked for nor given, and the encounter kept the crowd on tenter-hooks from beginning to end.

Lennon was magnificent at back, but was only better than Tirrell because he did his work in a polished and classy way. His judgment was wonderful, and his speed in turning and getting to the ball after he had been passed—not beaten, mind—was a great factor in his success. Tirrell was an imperturbable sort of fellow, and his height and weight were allied to a cunning that often had Jones astonished. Bailey made at least three thrilling saves, and was not to blame in any way for the goal registered against him.