

THE LEAGUE—DIV. III.: SCENES AT NEWPORT

TOWN'S DECISIVE VICTORY DISPLEASES CROWD.

Goalkeeper and Referee Attacked.

(By "CRUSADER.")

At Newport:

LUTON TOWN 3 goals
NEWPORT COUNTY Nil

LUTON.—Gibbon; Lennon, Tirrell; Foster, Walker, Jennings; Hoar, Higginbotham, Thompson, Butcher, Clarkson.

NEWPORT.—Carr; Dimmock, White; Nairn, Whitton, E. Edwards; Britain, Gittins, Paterson, Lowes, McDonald.

Referee.—Mr. J. E. Head, London.

Either the spirit of Guy Fawkes or the election fever must have got into the blood of the crowd at Newport, for play had not been in progress five minutes before they were howling and threatening the Town players, and crying for someone—not of Newport, of course—to be sent off. It continued with increasing ferocity to the end of the game, and the climax came when some of the hooligans threw stones at Tom Gibbon and then one jumped over the rails and dashed at the referee. From the Press box we were convinced that he struck Mr. Head, and the players agree, but when I interviewed the referee after the game he said that the man did not actually strike, but pushed him in the back. Anyway, there were all the elements of

AN UGLY SCENE.

and the Newport directors, players and police rushed up and tried to pacify the crowd.

What was the cause of the trouble? I think, in the first place, that the Newport supporters had an idea that as Luton had lost so heavily at Plymouth, their team would be able to break a long unhappy

spell, for they have only won one game this season, and that was as far back as September 7th. Only in two of six matches at Somerton Park have they scored, and of their total of seven goals they scored four at one spasm—against Bristol Rovers on the date mentioned.



They then went six games without a goal, and on Oct. 21st they scored a goal against Merthyr. The official match card on Saturday confidently expected one goal or more at the expense of the Town. They did not get it. The reason for the dissatisfaction lay in the fact that Newport are not a big side. They have several smart players, but as a team they lack experience and physique. When they ran up against

THE HEAVYWEIGHTS

of the Town team they could make no impression save by tactics that cannot be commended, and although our players were much bigger and heavier, it is an eloquent fact that Gibbon, Lennon (twice), Walker (twice), Higginbotham and Thompson were each laid out. Britain, the County's young right winger, attempted to go through Jennings on the touch-line and came a cropper, not once, but several times, but the referee and the linesman alike were convinced that the home player had nothing to complain about—and told him so, but the crowd thought that Britain was getting badly damaged, and so they lost their tempers, with the inevitable result that the County players also got rattled, and when they were in what proved to be

HOPELESS ARREARS

they were not very particular how they got possession, so long as they got it.

I suppose it follows, as a matter of course, that the Newport Club will be called upon for an explanation. It is pretty well-known that I have not placed Mr. Head in the first flight of referees, but he was better on Saturday than I have seen him, and there would have been no complaint for the home club against him any more than we could complain, but for the fact that the spectators were most unsportsmanlike. It was not the Town's fault that the team was so much heavier and stronger, but it was Newport's misfortune.

It was a good win, deserved to the uttermost, and if there had been any particular anxiety about the goal average—an anxiety we would like to see—the margin would have been greater. This in spite of the fact that Thompson got a bad blow on the thigh quite early in the game and was little more than a passenger for an hour. Had he been all square he would have bagged on more than one occasion. He might well have been excused leaving the field, but

PLUCKILY CARRIED ON

to the end and now and then caused trouble. From the outset the Town had the better of the game. They were faster, stronger, and cooler than the Ironsides, both in attack and defence, and it was not until late in the game that the home team had anything like the share of play that one expects from a home team. They were not lacking in pluck, and not deficient in skill, but from the first they seemed to be obsessed by the fear of defeat, and to play with an irritableness that was in sharp contrast to the confident methods of the Town.

It will thus be inferred that it was not an

attractive match, by any means, and the Town's success was largely attributable to shrewdness in taking advantage of the temper of the County, and at the interval Mr. Charles Green, who, in company with Mr. Harry Smart, was in charge of the team, advised the players not to be drawn into retaliative measures, but to keep their heads and maintain their

SUCCESSFUL TACTICS.

The result was apparent immediately, for the County led off with a rush, but the ball was quickly transferred, and any shred of hope that remained to either the Ironsides or their supporters was torn out by the Town's third goal. We came very near to several more in the next half-hour, but in the last quarter the Town played within themselves, and bothered less about goal getting than about keeping their side of the score sheet blank, and in this, although it does not alter my opinion that attack is the strongest defence, they succeeded, and the County left the field goal less once more.

Our first goal came after 12 minutes' play. Hoar won a corner and placed it well; Foster dashed in and headed the ball downwards, and it would have entered the net right away from Carr, when White interposed with his hand and

KNOCKED IT OUT

right under the eye of the referee, who promptly awarded a penalty. HIGGINBOTHAM was entrusted with the kick, and he crashed the ball into the roof of the net at terrific speed. Eight minutes later Thompson executed a clever dribble among a bunch of opponents and then pushed the ball on for BUTCHER to take in his stride and ram home a Bloomer-like shot from 15 yards' range, Carr being beaten to the world. There were more narrow escapes for the Newport goal before the interval, but the Town citadel had an extraordinary escape when Lennon, Walker and Tirrell all fell in the goal-mouth in stemming a Newport rush, and a goal seemed certain when the captain managed to scrape the ball off Gittins' toe and Jennings hustled it clear.

The third goal came within 60 seconds of the restart, and was a striking illustration of craftsmanship. The Town had a throw in on the right, and the players were all in position waiting for it, when

BUTCHER CREEPT UP

in the rear. Foster landed the ball right at his feet, and the little man turned and made tracks. At the right moment he passed to Clarkson, who shot low across goal. White tried to kick away, but barely reached the ball, which glanced across, and HIGGINBOTHAM, tearing in at full speed, slammed it past the helpless Carr. Late in the game Walker, Jennings and Tirrell saved when Newport appeared certain to score, while Gibbon made many good saves, two being masterly in courage and skill, for with thrilling dives he took the ball clean off opponents' feet. Newport played desperately to the end, but could not get through the defence.

The Town goalkeeper once more proved his worth, and he was not once found wanting in judgment or ability. His backs were

RELIABLE.

Both Lennon and Tirrell kicked and tackled skilfully all through. The halves were much too strong for the Newport forwards. They were always too powerful and too fast for the home forwards, whose attempts at short passing made them an easy prey. The home centre was scarcely seen, for he invariably found Walker's head or feet too quick. To Foster and Jennings similar tribute is due, and the latter did better in a flank position than hitherto, and his physique was very useful in strenuous moments. Considering that the forwards were handicapped by the injury to Thompson they gave a splendid exhibition. The left wing was the better, but certainly got more to do, and some of the passing movements initiated by Butcher evoked the admiration of

THE PHILISTINE CROWD.

On two other occasions Butcher had the hardest of luck in not adding to his score. Clarkson was elusive, but he needs to drop the habit of doubling when he has made ground, and would do better to get the ball across first time. Thompson had very little chance, for he was injured very early in the game. We thought Higginbotham had completed the hat-trick in the second half, but he hit the side net. He goes to the top of the goal-scissors for the Town, and would he but shoot oftener he would be likely to stick there. He was a powerful factor and was congratulated after the game by the Newport captain, but his penchant for falling back to the half-line when the Town were three up probably kept our victory down to three goals clear. He would have got more goals had he kept in the vanguard, for his absence militated against the efficiency of Hoar, who was up against the strongest of the home halves and the better back.

For Newport Carr kept goal well; White was the better back; Edwards the pick of the halves, and Lowes the most dangerous forward.

There were fewer than 5,000 spectators present, the Rugby match between Newport and Harlequins affecting the attendance.