

# THE LEAGUE—DIV. III.

## Clever Bristol City.

### DESERVED ALL THEY GOT AT LUTON.

(By "CRUSADER.")

LUTON TOWN ..... 1 goal

BRISTOL CITY ..... 1 ..

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

BRISTOL CITY.—Vallis; Dyer, Banfield; Neesam, Matthews, Cockerill; Worlock, Walker, Fairclough, Sutherland, Peacock.

Referee.—Mr. L. E. Vickery, Birmingham.

We were fortunate on Saturday to escape suffering defeat for the second week in succession. There are not two opinions about that. Bristol City convinced pretty nearly everybody that they were the smartest attacking side that has been seen on the Town ground this season, and it was our good fortune rather than our deberts to get off with a point. Not in any match at home this season have our players had so much leather-hunting with such small success, and this especially applies to the middle men, who, at one period of the game in particular, did not seem capable of anticipating one move in three of the visiting forwards. On form like this the City may well spoil Plymouth Argyle of honours that we thought were practically safe for the Argyle. Their defence may not be up to the standard of the Argyle, but as a well-balanced, fast, clever and energetic side, I think they are a shade in front of the Plymouth brethren.

We had the better of the first half, undoubtedly, but it was mainly because of superior strength, and our players were

#### ON TOP GEAR

all that time. The Citizens speedily showed in the second half that they had not expended all their reserve force, and until ten minutes from the end they kept up, not a ceaseless attack, but a series of brisk and determined raids, one following the other so quickly that the constant strain almost demoralised the Town team. Had the City forwards been as cool and accurate in shooting as in passing, they must have won, for no pair of backs could overcome so intelligent and re-



S. Hoar.

lentless an attack. When occasion demanded, the ball was swung about with good judgment, but the real attraction was the wonderful co-operation between forwards and halves, and especially the inside forwards and the centre-half, and the variation was supplied by the electric dashes of Fairclough.

Apart from the many fouls that were committed, and in which neither side could claim innocence, not by a long way, the game was the best entertainment we have had this season, and those who went to see two teams instead of one, must have left feeling that if they had not received full value in previous games,

### THE DEBIT WAS CLEARED

by this game. There were some deplorable incidents, and not a few accidents that necessitated trainers' visits to the field, and it now appears to be a recognised thing that when a player is beaten he may break the rules even at the risk of breaking bones. The referee was quite good except for the freedom he allowed players in this respect.

The City's goal came under three minutes from the start, and it evoked a lot of discussion. Certainly it should not have been scored, but the Town players never attempted to line up properly to meet a free kick just outside the penalty area, in straight line for goal. MAT-



Pocock.

THEWS, who took it, waved his hand and looked towards his left wing, and distracted the attention of some of the home players, and before they realised what was happening he had shot hard and straight for goal. Gibbon and Tirrell were both on the goal-line, and the keeper never moved, for the ball appeared en route for Tirrell, but it made a remarkable swerve inwards, and although Tirrell struck it with his forearm, he could not keep it out of the net. Those who attempted to apportion blame should not have begun on the goal-line, but in the open, where players left a broad gap.

The Town players played up strongly after this, and Hoar showed his apprecia-

tion of the serving by Butcher, and it was from him that the City goal had

### NARROW ESCAPES

and finally fell. One or two nice centres nearly brought a goal, and in trying to get the ball across again Hoar misdirected a little, and it went towards the bottom corner of the goal. Vallis came for it and appeared to have it all secure, but young Reid whirled into him, and Vallis, trying to upset Reid, was himself upset, for he lost the ball, and HIGGINBOTHAM, who had quietly followed up, only had to tap it into the net. This was ten minutes from the start, and although there were thrills without number in the remaining 80 minutes, the ball never again found the net. Thompson twice hit the bar with fine shots, and Tirrell was equally unlucky with a free kick in the second half, while Walker and Fairclough also hit the cross-piece. There was no lack of excitement from beginning to end, and play went from end to end with remarkable speed, but in the going the City showed the truer instinct and the greater skill. They were the best team the Town have met this season, and they fully deserved what they got. Their forward play was much superior to ours, and it was this forward skill in making ground and keeping control that rested the City backs. The wingers were fast and tricky as well as the inside men, and Fairclough was a thrustful leader. The outstanding figure, however, was Matthews. He was prone to minor infringements, but he was not only a fine spoiler, he was

### A MAGNIFICENT AGENT

in attack, and his nursing of the forward line was quite delightful. Dyer and Banfield did very well, but Vallis was anything but impressive.

The Town forward line was not as good as it appeared on paper. There was an absence of understanding, and shooting and passing left much room for improvement. Considering that he had not figured on the extreme right since last season, Thompson did well in the first half, and might have done better with more attention in the second. Higginbotham was not as good as usual, and it is to be hoped that he will find his shooting boots soon, as he did "last back-end." When he takes it into his head to "have a packet," he is the best shot of the inside forwards, but he did not show it on Saturday. Reid was not the utter failure that some suggested. Certainly he did not bear comparison with Fairclough, nor could it be expected, but he gave many nice passes, and was, as always, a first-class trier, but he has so very much to learn, and one gets tired of repeating the necessity of giving him time to develop, and that as an inside winger, not as a centre-forward.

Butcher was again the live wire in the Town attack. His dribbling and passing were equal to anything in the opposition, and his shooting was little worse than theirs. He made Hoar, too, and the latter would be the first to admit that his partner was all that could be desired as

## AN ARCHITECT

in building up attack and as a carrier. Hoar's frequent menacing of the City goal was due to Butcher's craft, and the winger responded admirably, and seldom did he fail to get the ball across to advantage.

The forwards may have been poor, but the middle line certainly had an off-day. They were harder worked than they have ever been since their visit to Birmingham last year, and they did not play with the spirit and skill that they showed against the Villa. In the first half they met the attack with determination, but they never got the hang of things, and the old fault of poor feeding was, if anything, more painfully apparent than ever, and in sharp contrast to the clever work of Matthews. Jennings probably did best, and he certainly gave a few passes to his wing, but wild kicking forward without any apparent design except to get the ball away somehow, was the order. As "stoppers," the Town halves are hard to beat on their ordinary form, but they did not touch it on Saturday by a long, long way, and the necessity of instruction in getting the ball down and keeping it down was never more obvious. The backs were overworked, and it was well they never flinched at all, and it was only their robust tackling that averted defeat. Tirrell, although far from well, played finely, and Lennon, although indiscreet, was alert and prompt in tackling and kicking. Gibbon had not a lot to do, but he got rid of one or two ugly troubles during the game.

To sum up, the visitors were the better balanced team and well coached, and that was the secret of their success.