

# THE LEAGUE—DIV. III.

## Luton's Gallant Fight.

### GIBBON'S GREAT COALKEEPING AT BRISTOL.

(By CRUSADER).

BRISTOL CITY ..... 1 Goal  
LUTON TOWN ..... Nil  
BRISTOL CITY.—Vallis; Dyer, Ranfield;  
Nesam, Matthews, Torrance; Worlock,  
Walker, Fairclough, Sutherland, Pocock.  
LUTON TOWN.—Gibbon; Lennon, Tirrell;  
Molyneux, Walker, Jennings; Reader,  
Butcher, Thompson, Irvine, Hoar.

Referee: L. E. Vickery, Birmingham.

If it had been possible to lay down the pen at half-time on Saturday and to have said the game was finished, there could have been no suggestion of flattery in the statement that the Town deserved to share the spoils. Up to then they had been quite as good as the "Babes" of Bristol on the run of the play. At the end of the second 45 minutes, however, one could only confirm the general opinion of the previous week, that Bristol City are about the cleverest side the Town have met this season. That compliment is rather qualified, perhaps, and needs explanation. Plymouth Argyle probably have a better defence, but the Bristol attack is far superior, and on that estimate our victors on Saturday are entitled to the palm. And from that it will be gathered that the Town played very much better than at Luton the previous week. They did

#### EVER SO MUCH BETTER

before the interval, and at that time I thought they had a good chance of winning, for they had shown not only capable defence, but vastly improved work forward. On several occasions the whole line took part in fast raids, and the inside men kept the ball on the carpet and slipped through the opposition very smartly, and while Vallis did not have as much serious work as Gibbon, he made three or four fine saves when one felt assured of a goal. It was this new feature forward that raised a load off the defence, and raised our hopes of pulling off a win.

That was not to be, however, for in the second half the City were unquestionably the better side, and it was only the glorious defence, in which Gibbon gave

## A GREAT EXHIBITION.

that averted a heavy defeat. The goal that won the match, however, was the luckiest I have seen this season, and there was far more sympathy with Gibbon than congratulation for FAIRCLOUGH, the scorer. It



T. Gibbon.

came thus. The referee ignored an appeal for offside against Pocock, who was unattended, and he centred squarely. The ball came past Lennon, and Gibbon had it covered as it came into an open space in front of goal. He positioned for it, but Jim Walker had dashed in and attempted to clear. He actually kicked the

ball, not forward as one paper says, but away from goal. Fairclough was in just the right position and had no difficulty in lapping the ball into the net. It was sheer bad luck for the Town, for I don't think anyone blamed Walker, and Gibbon was certainly not open to reproach.

The goal came just at the right time for Bristol, as all the players were working their hardest just then, and a goal to either seemed bound to settle the argument. They were encouraged to try for more, and the Town defence came out of

## A WITHERING ORDEAL.

with flying colours, and some idea of the admiration they won may be gathered from the fact that one Bristol writer said, "On this afternoon's display I prefer Luton's defence to that of Millwall, remarkable though the record of the latter has been." The difference between the first and second halves was in no small measure due to the enthusiasm of the spectators, for from thousands of throats came a thunder of encouragement that vitalised the City attack, and to a man the forwards played with a sort of desperate thrill. They did not rely on skill alone, for they went "neck and crop" into the Town players, for the ball, and when they got it they worked with remarkable pace and skill. In these trying minutes Gibbon and his backs did magnificent work. The Town half-backs could not withstand the pressure, and they did not reproduce their first half form, hence long periods of comparative inactivity by the Town forwards. After the goal the latter made one or two desperate efforts, but they were not often allowed to get very close to Vallis, although once Reader hooked the ball across and Vallis caught it under the bar as Irvine dashed in.

## WE CANNOT GRUMBLE

At the result, however we feel about the goal. Just that little bit of misfortune made all the difference, but on little mischance greater issues have been decided, and we can only hope that our turn may come to be similarly blessed.

Gibbon was the hero of the game. On at least half-a-dozen occasions he made saves

that bordered on the miraculous, and yet were only the result of grand judgment, timing and agility. Thrice he foiled Fairclough by diving at the centre-forward's feet and snatching the ball away, and Sutherland and Walker were each frustrated in similar fashion, while he leaped across goal and diverted hard shots that were right on the target. It was the cleverest goalkeeping I have seen for the Town since the war. Lennon and Tirrell rendered yeoman service and got the ball away from awkward situations many times, and, as the writer previously quoted says, they seemed "to read the minds of the forwards and master their manœuvres." Both kicked grandly and tackled with promptitude and stubbornness, and were as reliable as ever.

The middle men played

#### A STERLING GAME

in the first half, and were better than the home trio, but not so afterwards. Molyneux found in Pocock the cleverest forward on the field, but stuck to him, and fitted in with Lennon as well as ever he did, while he found time to join in the attack. In the second half he had his knee gashed and was also very badly brought down by a wild and foul jump by Sutherland, but he played on to the end. His only fault, if it could be called a fault, was that he might have shadowed Pocock a little more closely, but then the sagacious Sutherland would have had more rope. Walker was ever so much better than in the previous encounter, and although Fairclough was using a lot of vigorous and often unfair methods, he was lucky to get the goal. Jennings was generally

#### THE MASTER

of Worlock, and his old club-mate at Merthyr, Baird Walker, could do little against him. I have already mentioned that the forwards showed neat forward work in the first half. Most interesting, of course, was the debut of Irvine, and I am certain that good judges would be agreed on the wisdom of persevering with him. He was quick on the ball, and kept it down, and several of the first half attacks were due to his craftsmanship. He must, however, keep in line if he is to meet the requirements of Hoar, and not fall back too much. He will stand a far better chance of goal-scoring if he leaves the halves to work their own salvation. Butcher was not so good on the right as he is on the left, but twice he got in very fine raids, and only brilliant saves by Vallis thwarted the inside men. Thompson also led the line well indeed before the interval, but got few chances later. Reader, who was a favourite with the crowd, showed to advantage in the first half, but Hoar was not given nearly enough work, especially after crossing over, yet he was our most dangerous forward when he got going, and his centres always spelt trouble.

For the City the best men were Banfield, Torrance, Fairclough, Sutherland and Pocock.

It was a game worth watching in the first half, but not so good afterwards. The crowd of 15,000 were apt to grumble at times.