

KNOCKED OUT!

GALLANT FIGHT AT BURY.

Luton Town's Exit from Cup Competition.

There may be a disposition towards thinking that the defeat at Bury was the end of all interest in Luton football. Certainly we have no further local interest in the Cup, and as things stand in the League there is little prospect of a better position than that we hold now. But it is just as well that those responsible for the progress of the club should realise that it is not a day too early to commence building up for next season. By "those responsible" I do not mean the directors only; they are immediately responsible, to be sure, but I mean the whole body of support. After all, it is no good talking of directors' shortcomings when there is a shortage of money coming in, and unless the money is there we cannot expect a "promotion" or a "Cup" team. As I have previously said, considering the size of the town and the limited resources at the disposal of the directors, the club's position in the football world is something to be proud of. The position is due in the main to the support received, and while we may think at times that better results could be obtained for the support given, and find fault with team selection and so on, I think, on the whole, there is not a lot to grumble at.

If we look at the thing in its

PROPER PROPORTION

we shall come to this conclusion: that if on an average income of about £250 per week—I think that may be a high figure—we can achieve the success we have, then on a doubled income we can do almost twice as well. It is NOW, not next September, that support is wanted, and it is up to all who take an interest in the Town Club to give the most loyal support possible and see not only that the club pays its way to the end of the season, but also that there is a nucleus from which summer wages may be paid, and such guarantees as are necessary given to players, and so ensure a greatly improved playing list for next season. It is a keen disappointment to us that we are out of the Cup Competition as well as in a comparatively low position in the League tourney, but it has one value: it enables us to see things in truer perspective and to make preparations for the future. I am quite sure that the directors will not quarrel with me over this statement, and as something of a medium between the official and the lay sides of the club, I trust that the latter will realise to the full that necessity for giving absolutely loyal and generous support between now and the month of May.

I have said that the result at Bury was a big disappointment, but I am quite sure that all the Luton people who made the journey will agree with me when I say that our boys put up a gallant fight. What luck there was was not on our side. We lost by the odd goal, but I am sure that if we had been favoured by the draw, we should have been in the next round of the Cup. Bury have a good side, and we cannot grudge them the victory if we believe in the system of drawing for the Cup-ties. It is no good saying that Bury have a good side and then saying that the Town were no good. The margin of defeat was

THE NARROWEST POSSIBLE.

and our lads played well to run the Bury team to that fine point. Perhaps the most pertinent remark I heard was made by one Bury supporter to another after the game.

Said one, "Our lads have played none too well."

"No," was the reply, "but it's the least we can say for Luton that our lads played as well as the Luton chaps let 'em. They are as good as any Second Division team that's been at Bury this season, and a jolly sight better than most, and if they got in the Second Division they would have as much chance of promotion as we have."

That, I think, truly reflected the opinion of the average Bury supporter, and it was certainly a good thing for Bury that they were drawn at home. I am convinced that we should have won quite comfortably at Luton.

The home team got a good start. They

Luton.

The home team got a good start. They went off at a great pace, and they were settled down almost before Luton knew the geography of the ground. That always has a bearing on the result, and when to that was added the lucky circumstance that gave them their first goal, they certainly had no room to complain of misfortune. They were the better side, without a doubt, for the first hour, but the grim resistance offered by the Town kept them going at full speed to retain this fortunate lead. I should hesitate to say that Lennon was at fault in this goal. Under other circumstances, he would have got the ball away long before danger threatened, but in this case, by a grim mischance, he slipped down, and although Tirrell made every possible effort to avert the danger, Bullock, the home centre-forward, managed to get the ball past him, and it sped off the slippery surface of the ground and just entered the goal. The second goal to Bury was also something of

A GIFT.

Ten minutes after the interval, Tirrell handled, ever so slightly admitted, but handled, nevertheless. The offence was only a foot inside the area, but right under the nose of the referee, and he had to give a penalty kick. It was one of those occurrences that make one think there should be some relaxation to the rigidity of the "penalty" punishment. Here was a case of handling almost at the extreme limit of the penalty area, very near the angle of it, with no very serious threat on the goal, yet the ball was carried from there and placed twelve yards from the target and a free shot allowed. Had it been only one step nearer the Bury goal there would have been no such punishment, but because it was the wrong white line, a goal was offered for the taking.

It was after this that Bury realised the true mettle of the Town, and where previously the plaudits had been following attacks, they now recognised Bury's defensive measures, and with a fearful sort of interest the Bury supporters waited the downfall of their goal. On one occasion there was a distinct case of handling by a Bury defender, far more palpable, far more deserving of punishment than that for which Tirrell had been penalised, but, unluckily for Luton, the referee was not in the right place to see it. He is a little man, and there were several players between him and the offender. Had the merited award been made it is highly probable that the result would have been different, for it occurred nearly fifteen minutes before the end. With seven minutes to go, however, a repetition of the offence was receipted by a penalty kick, and a goal was scored. The Town tried very hard afterwards to do that which would earn them a title to another fight, and the home players had to forfeit much of the reputation that Luton sup-

porters had credited to them, in order to maintain their advantage.

And the end came with the Bury team victorious.

THE DECISIVE FACTORS

of the game were:—

Bury scored through BULLOCK after ten minutes' play.

Bury scored through McCRAE from a penalty kick ten minutes after the interval.

Luton scored through TIRRELL from a penalty kick seven minutes before the end.

The ground appeared to be in splendid condition before the start, but after a few minutes' play it was obvious that the roller had only hidden a lot of trouble. The surface was very soft, but just below the greasy turf there was hard ground, and the ball did some tricky things. Bury more quickly accustomed themselves to the conditions than the Town, and without making contact with Gibbon they were often threatening trouble. When the Town forwards did get away the Bury backs were playing so well up the field that offside whistling was frequent. Gibbon had a lot more work to do than Richardson before the interval, and did it well. For a few minutes after change of ends, this state of things continued, but after the second goal had been scored Luton played with tremendous vigour and dash, and had Bury tired and leg-weary before the cessation came.

I have already said that the whole of the Town team worked hard, and deserved all praise for their valiant efforts, and it is hardly just to select one before another in any department of the side. Gibbon was blameless quite, and made a great but unavailing effort to stop the first scoring shot. He did well, but has often had much more to do. Lennon and Tirrell were nominally responsible for the goals registered against, but it would be churlish to say anything severer than that, for both did wonderfully well. Lennon seldom put a foot wrong, and at least one opponent was surprised by the resourcefulness of Tirrell against a crack wing. Their kicking was remarkably true and sure under such conditions, and although the Bury pair looked the safer for an hour, our men compelled

A REVISION

of that estimate before the end. All the middle men did nicely against a smart and fast quintette, and if I select Roe in conjunction with Tirrell for special mention, it is only because we had been told that Bury's right wing was the cleverest the club had known since its palmiest days, and not because he did better than Molyneux and Lennon or better than Jennings or Walker. Every man figuring in the middle line, for Jennings and Walker changed places in the second half, played magnificently from start to finish. I am not going to say that this exchange of places was unwise, either, for I do not know why it was made, and I do not know that I can say that Walker was better than Jennings or Jennings was better than Walker in either position. They both did better at centre-half than at centre-forward, and both worked like Trojans throughout. The middle line was always doing great work. The forward line was not so good as that of Bury, but its style of football was different. The home forwards played together better because they were under the influence of a fine leader and an exceptionally clever inside right. Luton's combination was rather that of flank and flank than that of a line. They all tried their utmost, and while Butcher was very skilful in his initiatory work, Higginbotham's powerful rushes were a constant menace. Hoar did not have so many opportunities as Clarkson, but both made the most of what they got, and with a ripe leader the line would have been much more dangerous. The play of the wingers left no doubt in my mind that the wings as constituted are the best we have, and the only alternative to what happened on Saturday was that Roe should have gone centre-forward instead of Jennings if a change were deemed advisable.

Bury's defence was saved a lot of work by the excellence of the middle men, who fed their forwards well, with the result that the defenders had plenty of time to prepare for attacks upon their charge. McCrae and Stage struck me as being fit for any side in the kingdom.

The game was fairly clean, and unfair tricks were about equal until the closing stages, when Bury got afraid and then did many things that would have been better left undone.

Mr. Pardoe was a good referee, and apart from the omission to see McCrae's earlier offence in the second half in the penalty area, was almost without fault.

BURY	2 Goals
LUTON	1 "

BURY.—Richardson; Heap, Adamson; Brooks, Callagher, McCrae; Robbie, Stage, Bullock, Burkinshaw, Aitken.

LUTON.—Gibbon; Lennon, Tirrell; Molyneux, Jennings, Roe; Hoar, Higginbotham, Walker, Butcher, Clarkson.

Referee: Mr. G. M. Pardoe, Kidderminster.