

CUP HOPES SHATTERED.

LUTON TOWN'S DEFEAT AT HIGHBURY.

THE GAME AND ITS CRITICS.

(By "CRUSADER").

Napoleon Bonaparte once said that he had noticed that "Providence always favoured the big battalions." It was Luton Town's experience at Highbury that Providence, if anything to do with football, was on the side of the big guns. For none of the army of disappointed people returning to Luton, however, was there greater compensation than mine. It was not merely that the Arsenal Club very kindly allowed me to bring back the ball, duly autographed by all the players and the officials who had taken part, but it was a change to find five or six thousand people supporting Luton in a match away from home, and so able to form their own opinion of the game and of the merits and demerits of the teams engaged.

There have been more "inquests" on this game than on any in which the Town have taken part this season, and there is a very large majority for returning a verdict to the effect that the passing of the Town from the Cup Competition this year was

DUE TO MISADVENTURE.

It is a change to hear critics, many of them of practical experience, agreeing that the Arsenal had all the smiles of Fortune. I quite agree, but must confess that the nice things said by some of the professional critics of the Press surprised me a good deal. It was one of the poorest games the Town have played this season, and yet there is far more sympathy than condemnation. Indeed, I am not sure, if the players have read half the nice things said about them, that my journey to Gillingham with them next Saturday will be quite a happy one for me. We have it on the authority of no less a journal than "The Times," that "there was not three goals difference between the sides on the run of the play." The same writer holds that the Town had the three best players on the field. Alas! whether we win or lose at Gillingham, if I were to say that there would be a howl of derision in club, "pub," and warehouse next Monday morning. But there it is, recorded for all time by the greatest journal on the earth.

We lost heavily, too heavily, but the Arsenal were

THE BETTER SIDE;

better balanced, better confided, better skilled in operating on a pitch that

each of the three goals they got before the interval, and the fourth should never have been allowed, for the scorer was off-side, but the referee, good as he undoubtedly is, was not placed happily to determine the disposition of the players involved. The Town's goal, too, was somewhat fortunate, as will be seen.

Play had not been in progress ten minutes before large sections of the crowd were of the opinion that Sid Hoar was England's International outside-right. He was master of the Arsenal defenders thus early, and in combination with Green was

VERY UNLUCKY

not to score the first goal for the Town. It was well for the home team that Robson had neither nerves nor misfortune in these trying moments, for he alone brought them through safely. On the other hand, when the Arsenal opened the scoring they got it with a shot that was "no shot." MILNE, securing the ball twenty yards out, after a flag-kick had been beaten out, lifted the ball into goal, apparently for the benefit of his forwards, but it went over their heads, and seemed to be a small matter for Orr to deal with, but to the consternation of the Luton team and their supporters, the ball went over the goalkeeper's head and practically between his hands, and put the Arsenal on the high road to victory. That goal made a lot of difference to the Arsenal, and they began to play clever, confident football. Their half-backs became a second forward line, and in spite of the thrilling and dangerous moves of Hoar and Green whenever they got the ball, the Arsenal had the better of the exchanges, and frequently Anderson and Till were struggling against

A VIRILE AND BRAINY LINE

in the penalty area.

The second was just as lucky, but in a different way. Haden, from over twenty yards out, emulated Milne, but his shot struck the bar and came straight down to the feet of BLYTH, who only had to walk it through. Five minutes later Dr. Paterson, operating in a little world of his own, got across a high lob. Anderson, Walker, Orr, and Woods all went for the ball together, and Woods scored before he knew it, for the ball gave him one in the neck and then went over the line.

When the Town embarked upon the

LORD MAYOR AND LUTON PLAYERS



Luton Footballers lined up at Highbury to meet the Lord Mayor of London, Sir Louis Newton. From the right the players to be seen are Green, Kerr, Hoten, Orr, and Millar and Walker. Approaching the Lord Mayor are the Mayor of Luton (Alderman A. B. Attwood), and the Mayor of Islington. [Luton News.]

reminded one spectator of the first mud he saw "in Flanders' fields."

It is easy to be wise after the event, and there are hundreds who saw the game now able to point out the errors of the directors in their selection of the team, and the blunders of the players. To the latter I am bound to refer in due course, but I do not see that the directors could be blamed: they sent out their best team, the eleven that ninety per cent. of the regular supporters would have fielded. We were beaten, but while the result suggests that we were thrashed, the Arsenal did not think so at all, and they, the jubilation having worn off, must have appreciated even more than they did before the game, the advantages they received at the expense of Luton.

Could the same teams have met at Luton I am certain in my own mind that the result would have been reversed, and, having done their very best, the Town players have nothing to reproach themselves for. The "luck of the draw," the "luck of the toss," the "luck of the first goal;" these may sound like mere phrases, but in reality they were

POTENT FACTORS

in the issue. They meant playing at home before 30,000 of their own supporters; playing on a pitch that is reputed to be "always bog;" playing with half a gale at their backs in the most important part of the game; and getting an early lead.

The Town began in a manner that frightened the Arsenal, and one or two of their players were none too scrupulous in these early stages, and for twenty minutes there was no indication that it would be anything but a close game. Immediately, however, that goal came, the Arsenal played with a winning confidence, and Fortune responded in a manner beyond their expectations. There was a considerable element of luck about

second half they soon gave promise of better things. There was more virility about the middle line, and the forwards were soon prancing about the Arsenal goal area, but there was no such fortune for them as that which favoured their opponents. In one terrific struggle in the Arsenal goal-mouth the ball was kept out of the net as much by the unfortunate position of Town players, who got in the way of shots, as by the judgment and skill of the home defenders. Hoar nearly knocked the jersey off the prostrate Green with one fierce drive that was going straight for the farther end of the goal.

When their efforts were unrewarded the Town players

SEEMED TO LOSE HEART

a little, and after Turnbull had made a hash of a glorious opening that he had worked for himself, he made amends a few moments later when he was allowed to go through from an offside position and beat Orr at close quarters.

Still the Town pegged away, and with Hoten and Butcher changing places there was a bit more weight added to the immediate attack, and there were a few lively scenes in the Arsenal goal area before GREEN took a pass from the left and beat Robson with a ground shot. The goalkeeper shaped to receive the ball on his left, but Green, who was falling, shot to the other end of the goal, and Robson's frantic dive was inaccurate, and the ball passed under his swooping body and into the net.

There were only nine minutes left for play then, and there was no hope of drawing level.

The Arsenal had

NOT MANY BRILLIANTS,

but they had eleven hard workers, with a fair amount of skill, and when they discovered the weakness of the Town

team they concentrated there. There was not as much sparkle about their work, perhaps, but it was more sustained than that of the Town. As was once said of the Germans by an ancient writer, the Town were "powerful only in sudden efforts," and nearly all the danger came from one flank—the right.

Orr did many good things, but the poor moments he had were expensive. That should not dishearten him, for he will improve. Anderson and Till were none too sure in the first half. They could not get the ball far enough away from goal, and often it dropped at the feet of the Arsenal halves, but that was perhaps as much the fault of the Town halves as of the backs. As a pair, however, they showed better style and judgment than the Arsenal backs, and under more favourable conditions would never have been beaten three times before the interval. Taking the game as a whole, Till played magnificently, and his duels with "Dr. Pat." in the second half nearly always ended in

A BRILLIANT SCOTCHING,

and the little back won tremendous applause. Anderson also came into his own, and did many clever things.

Usually the strongest part of the team, the Town middle line, as a line, was a long, long way below par. Walker was the only one to find his best form, and he has not played better in any game this season. He never gave up, and his powers of recovery, especially in the first half, when things were going badly, were quite remarkable. Haden must have wondered how it was done on more than one occasion when he was dispossessed after getting a clear start. Had Jennings and Millar been in like trim there would have been a very different tale to tell. Jennings has carried the team through so often when things have seemed hopeless that it came as a shock to the supporters to find him off-colour to such an extent. He began well, but quickly fell off, and he did not come near his usual game until the second half, and at no time did he play in the masterful way that has given us so many useful points. Millar was inconsistent. At times he took the ball off Paterson or read the intentions of Blyth with ease, but a moment or two afterwards he would be beaten easily. Nor was his feeding as good as it will be next Saturday.

Hoar and Green shared with Till and Walker

THE HONOURS

of the Town side. They were a live pair, and seldom failed to make ground. Hoar deserved all the good things that were said of him. His pace and footwork were a revelation to the habitues of Highbury, and it is no flight of fancy to say that he would have been an International trial man had the wing position not been already allotted before this game. Green again played a grand game, and was easily the pick of the inside forwards. As a pair they were the best wing on the field. Kerr did not get much chance, for Graham held a close conference with him for most of the game. Butcher was the most badly-handicapped man on the field. He was the lightweight of the inside forwards, and he could not free his feet from the fettering mud. Consequently, Hoten did not get a tithe of the work that he should have had, and so got little chance of shining.

Robson was a splendid goalkeeper, alert, confident and judicious in positioning. He made some brilliant saves. Mackie was the better back, although he had no great amount of judgment to spare. The half-backs played grandly, especially Graham, and his combination with the inside men was

DELIGHTFUL TO WATCH.

All the forwards played nice football, keeping the ball on the ground and each man taking position with almost uncanny accuracy, but there was nothing formidable in their shooting apparatus.

Mr. Watson controlled the game well. There was only one little flutter of any consequence, and that was in the second half when Turnbull and Jennings got at loggerheads, and both were cautioned. The deficiency most noticeable in the referee was a lack of speed, for he was often toiling in the rear when he should have been well up with the play.

It was a good Cup-tie game and the 37,000 spectators, who paid £2,315 for admission, were delighted with the Red Cross Band's performance before the game.

The Lord Mayor of London, the Lady Mayoress, the Sheriffs and their ladies, the Hon. Geoffrey Howard, M.P., Mr. Thos. Keens, M.P., and Mrs. Keens, the Mayor of Luton (Alderman A. B. Attwood) and the Town Clerk (Mr. Wm. Smith) saw the game, and before the start the Lord Mayor shook hands with the players and officials.

THE ARSENAL 4 goals

LUTON TOWN 1 goal

THE ARSENAL. — Robson; Mackie, Baker; Milne, Graham, Young; Dr. Paterson, Blyth, Turnbull, Woods, Haden.

LUTON TOWN.—Orr; Anderson, Till; Walker, Jennings, Millar; Hoar, Green, Kerr, Butcher, Hoten.

Referee: Mr. G. N. Watson, Nottingham
Linesmen: Messrs. C. R. Newman and P. R. Y. Bloye.