

DEFEAT AT HOME.

Plymouth Shock for Luton Town.

MISSED OPPORTUNITIES.

(By "CRUSADER.")

PLYMOUTH ARGYLE 2 goals
LUTON TOWN Nil
LUTON.—Gibbon; Graham, Till; Anderson, Walker, Roe; Hoar, Green, Kerr, Hoten, Danskin.

PLYMOUTH.—Craig; Forbes, Russell; Logan, Preston, Ross; Corcoran, Cherrett, Fowler, Walker, Batten.

Referee: Mr. E. C. Sambrook, Swansea.

All our hopes were dashed to the ground by this unexpected result. It was a bitter blow, and the disappointment was deepened by the news of what had happened to Swansea and Millwall. Had the Town won it would only have required two more such results in each club to have put them level with Swansea. And then, when we add to this the fact that the Town were by far the better side from the scientific standpoint, and that they pressed for three-fourths of the game, our dissatisfaction is not diminished. The Town should have made the issue safe in the first half hour, judging on the run of the play. After the fine successes over the Rangers and at Plymouth, promotion hopes were raised once more, but I fancy we can now abandon the idea that we have an outside chance of elevation.

For those who came to see football alone, without any particular interest in the winning side, it was a splendid struggle, and there were periods when the skill reached a very high pitch indeed. The superiority of the Town in the manipulation of the ball was beyond question, and after the game one of the Plymouth officials said that their players had never been so exhausted. They were

GLAD OF THE REST

at the interval, but they were doubly happy when the final whistle sounded.

So much better were the Town before goal was scored in the twenty-fourth minute, that when the Argyle scored we were not troubled very much with thoughts of defeat. The goal came as the result of a praiseworthy effort. Following a corner kick, Gibbon had to pick the ball off the line, and although he sent it out, it was not very far, and WALKER, standing well behind the other players, shot hard from fifteen yards' range, and the ball entered the net close to the spot, Gibbon being a second too late. Some thought he should have saved, but it appeared to me that his vision was obstructed until the ball was well on its way. The Town played so well that Craig's goal underwent thrilling escapes, notably from Hoar, Danskin and Roe, while Kerr and Green were more than once only a foot distant from success. The pressure was so severe that the Argyle forwards had to assist the half-backs, but now and then a big lunge would reach the Argyle's wingers or centre-forward, who were lying well up the field, and away they would go on raids that always spelt danger because of the bustling methods of Fowler, and the speed and trickery of Corcoran. Once Fowler scored, but the linesman had signalled long before he got in his shot, and it was stated that Fowler handled.

THE MOST BRILLIANT

individual effort of this half, however, was by Roe, who dribbled with the speed and the skill of a Bloomer, and carried the ball forty yards, past several opponents, almost under the nose of Craig, and from the subsequent tussle Craig saved wonderfully close to the post, when on his hands and knees. Before this there had been a loud outcry for a penalty kick, for Craig had gone for the ball at the same time as Forbes, and as the goalkeeper failed to field properly, Forbes was alleged to have handled. The Town players and the spectators behind the goal set up a great appeal, and the referee consulted both linesmen before he decided that no offence had been committed. All in the vicinity were convinced that Forbes did handle, but the referee was not in a position to see, neither were the linesmen well placed.

In the second half the Town again did the more attacking, but Craig and Russell played grand football. Hoar and Danskin repeated their efforts of the first half, and centres were continually falling in the Argyle goalmouth, but they were not any cleverly, and Craig again made many fine saves. When the onslaught was at its hottest the ball was swung out to the Argyle left. FOWLER, who was unmarked, got to it before Graham, who had shortly before been off the field

for an injured knee, went past him and stalled off the challenge of Till, and then went through to fire in a terrific shot as Gibbon came out, and the ball struck the bar and fell over the line for

A MAGNIFICENT GOAL.

There was then no doubt about the result, for only four minutes remained for play.

The responsibility for defeat does not rest with the defence, in spite of the fact that two goals were registered against them. It was the inability of the inside forwards to drive home the attacks they had so cleverly helped to build. Of their individual capacity, apart from poor finishing, one could have little but praise, but they did not work in unison, and each of the three appeared to regard himself as a lonely ambassador, whose duty was to try and bore a hole through the solid barrier that the Argyle backs and halves offered. Late in the game Kerr did feed Hoar with several fine passes, but it was then too late. There was too much close work, and in the matter of distribution the Argyle, while having less of the ball, made better use of it, and their raiding propensities were always fraught with danger, for they never shirked a crash with an opponent, and were

NEVER SHY

of using their weight.

Hoar and Danskin centred so consistently that there should have been a crop of goals, for they seldom wasted a ball, but when it came to a contest between the Argyle backs and the Town inside forwards, possession generally went to the former. The Town wingers were the best of the line.

One of the first comments I heard after the game was the criticism of the half-back play, but they fed the forwards well enough to suit the keenest critic, and it was from the intermediate line that most of the inaugural work in attack came. So clever was the passing on the ground that I think if Roe and Anderson had been in the forward line they would have won the match themselves, and they, with Walker, were the best controllers of the ball. No, the deficiency lay in the inside forwards' inability to finish well. Dribbled they never so well, they did not put in more than one really good shot each, and they missed many chances.

It is in this department that remedial measures are due, if anywhere, and to meddle with any other department first would not improve the side. If drastic changes are to be made, then I prefer to see the team, one position excepted, constructed as during

THE PHENOMENAL RUN

before Christmas.

There is no reflection on Walker at centre-half. He played magnificently, having no superior on the field. The only "fault"—note the quotation marks—to be alleged against him is that he played pure football against opponents who were not disposed to be ceremonious, and who require to be met with like tactics.

Roe and Anderson were practically as good, although the latter was disposed to allow Batten too much rope. Roe had to meet one of the finest wingers in the South, and he did his work well, so well that the goals did not come from that side of the field. All three fed with admirable precision, and were a part of the machinery of attack.

Till was the safer back, although Graham did well, but they were severely hustled by the vigorous Argyle forwards, and had little opportunity for consideration as to what they should do with the ball.

Gibbon had not a heavy day, and only a few shots to deal with, and he did his bit well.

Craig again proved a very fine goalkeeper, resourceful, agile, strong. He and Russell saved the Argyle from heavy defeat, for they never lost their heads under

THE HEAVIEST PRESSURE,

and they had many exciting periods. The referee had to speak to Russell in the second half for, apparently, questioning an official decision, and it was evidently a serious admonition.

Preston was the pick of three vigorous middle men, but the other two were not too scrupulous, Logan especially being prone to trip when he was beaten. Corcoran and Fowler were the best forwards, with Cherrett a useful forager.

Mr. Sambrook made one or two errors, but they were of a minor character, and he did splendidly in a game that was always at needle point, and in which pace and vigour were not lacking.

That the Cup-tie at Watford attracted a large number of supporters goes without saying, but the attendance exceeded 8,000, and shows that good matches will draw.