

Football Notes and News.

By "Grasshopper."

SOUTHERN LEAGUE.

LUTON'S PERFORMANCE AT PLYMOUTH.

With another shuffle of the front line, can it be said that Luton are speedily coming back to their old form? Their performance at Plymouth on Saturday would lead one to believe so. After their disappointing display against Southampton the week before, everyone naturally expected that the Blues would come home from Plymouth severely defeated. Defeated they certainly were, but only by the odd goal. It generally requires a team to be in tip-top form to win away; a draw is generally regarded as eminently satisfactory. Luton might—and ought to, as many think, have effected a draw on Saturday, but evidently there were again "lost opportunities." However, taking all things into consideration, a defeat of 2 goals to 1 was nothing to be greatly depressed about.

As already mentioned, there was a re-construction of the team from that of the previous Saturday. Jones was played at left half. It has always been a wonder to a good many why Jones has been so often left out, and they have been ungenerous enough to put it down to "favouritism"; but now that he has been included in the eleven, it is to be hoped that he will be kept in that position for some time to come. Bob Hawkes, who was fortunately able to travel with the team, played inside left in the forwards, being partnered by Latheron. Pearson was at centre, whilst the right wing was constituted by Rankin and Hall. The rest of the visiting team was as usual.

Plymouth, of course, had their very best team in the field. Sutcliffe, that able goal keeper, was between the posts; Butler and Atterbury were at back; McCormick, Clark, and McIntyre, at half-back; while the front string was composed of Burch, Leonard, Ingham (centre), Morris, and Holden.

There was a good attendance, about 10,000 being present, and the weather conditions were excellent. The home side were the first to make headway, the left wing taking the ball towards the Luton citadel. Hogg, however, stepped in at the right moment and cleverly stopped the progress of Holden and Morris. All the same, this early attack on their goal seemed to liven Luton up, and Pearson headed a move to the other end. Latheron, getting the ball wide out, made a dash and got close in, when he was checked by Butler. The backs on both sides were showing remarkably good form, and had to deal with a series of whirlwind rushes, which both lines of forwards frequently indulged in. Latheron and R. Hawkes were constantly a source of trouble to their opponents, and Sutcliffe had all his work cut out to clear away a hot shot from the former.

The pace was very hot indeed, and both ends were quickly visited in turn. Hall, who all through had shown a good turn of speed and fine control of the ball, gave R. Hawkes a fine centre, which was sent only inches wide of the post. A spell of pressure on Plymouth's goal was ended up by McCormick kicking out to Ingham. He transferred to Burch, who sprinted right through before middling the ball. Ingham, who had kept in line with his wing man, fastened on to the ball, and opened up the scoring with an unstoppable shot. This point further urged on the Argyle men, who swooped down in a body on Platt's goal, and he had to fist away a stinger from Morris. Hawkes, Pearson, and Hall were now combining splendidly, and from one of their excursions Hall put on the equalising point. After this both teams went at it at top rate, and Platt was given a stiff handful from McCormick, which he did well to get away. The interval arrived with the scores level—one goal each.

Resuming, the Blues opened the attack; Pearson made tracks for goal, but the home defence was sound this time. Breaking away, McCurdy stopped Leonard in the nick of time. After some even play, White put the visiting forwards in possession, and they swooped down on Sutcliffe's charge, Pearson eventually sending a hot shot just wide of the upright. Plymouth got away now and then, but were not able to do much against the visitors' strong defence, Hogg's performance being especially noteworthy.

Then Rankin worked his way on the wing, and sent a nice cross shot, but the Luton skipper missed, and Clark had no difficulty in clearing. However, Luton's right wing were giving the local defence a great deal of trouble. Rankin shot just a little too wide. The next point of interest was when McIntyre stopped a promising movement, and Plymouth set up an attack, but McCurdy brought relief with a clearing kick. Leonard and Burch took up the running, and the latter completed the movement with a wide shot.

Now Plymouth set up an attack, which brought about a score. Morris went through, and passed out to Holden. The latter passed neatly to Ingham, who ran round Hogg and scored amid great enthusiasm. After this Argyle did much better, Burch Leonard, and Morris being especially prominent. Ingham tried to work round the backs when close in, but Platt cleared. McCurdy and Hogg defended gallantly. Ingham got through, but shot wide. Time was called with Plymouth 2, Luton 1.

When the message was flashed through to the Luton ground at half time that the Blues were level with their opponents, the spirits of the crowd were immediately in the ascendant, and there was hope—slight hope, it is true—that Luton might after all bring a point home with them, as last season they effected a draw away, when neither side scored; while at home the Blues beat the Argyle by the odd goal, the final score being 3-2 in favour of Luton.

Pearson did very well at centre, and if Latheron's place could be improved upon, Saturday's string of forwards might yet pull us out of the fire. That, of course, will not now be a very easy thing to do, seeing that we have only obtained one point out of a possible 8, and stand one from the bottom of the League table. However, we have been in a bad position before, and have got out of it. Let us hope that we may do the same this season. The time is young yet, and if the directors will really only try Saturday's team for a while, and abstain from that eternal chopping about of the players, we may improve our position. Anyhow, as cynics may say, we cannot make it much worse.