

FOOTBALL NOTES.

(By CRUSADER).

From my notes in the "Tuesday Telegraph" some appear to imagine that I am not satisfied with the victory of Luton Town on Saturday. In one way the surmise is correct. Who in Luton will be satisfied ever until the Town are in Division I. of the League? There is no resting-place, even at the top, in football, and we all want to see the Town proceed to the very highest honours that can be won. That explains my dissatisfaction, and so it will be recognised that it is only of a general character. I am like everybody else in Luton—the best is not too good for me. Another matter that I had better deal with at once is a sort of charge levelled against me that I sent to Norwich a report which states that the Town were not deserving of their big margin. Why this should be charged to my manifold shortcomings I do not know. I never sent anything of the kind to Norwich or anywhere else. I agree that Skermer did not deserve such a record against him, because of his very fine display, but on the merits of the game I do not think the Town's superiority would have been exaggerated had there been six clear goals in it. Even allowing for the fact that some of the Town players did not give of their very best form, I think more goals should have been scored by the forwards.

From every point of view, with the exception of goal, I think Luton were better. In constructive attacks they were more resourceful, stronger, and faster, and Skermer was given every opportunity of proving that he is a goalkeeper of the first class. There was, on the face of it, a tinge of luck about Bookman's opening goal, but when one considers all the circumstances leading up to it, the only fault of it—if that is a fault—was that, instead of crashing the ball into the net, Bookman scraped it through. I have also heard Simms' second goal criticised, some holding that Skermer should have saved. I do not think any goalkeeper could have saved it from the position in which Skermer was when the ball was shot. It went like a flash, right under the bar, and the way he got to it at all was really wonderful. As to the fourth goal, there is the claim that Simms was offside. I agree that he was in an offside position, but he certainly was not interfering with the play in any way, and if, as I believe was the view of the referee, Gray touched the ball as he tackled Higginbotham, Simms was all right. I have not heard any fault with the other goal Simms scored, and certainly there cannot be too much praise. It was the hallmark of opportunism. The defence was in apple-pie order according to the "Referee's Primer," when the home centre got a pass square in front of goal and a matter of twenty odd yards out. He made a bee-line for goal, playing a sort of "tip-tap-toe" business as he went past the backs and finally pushed the ball into the net away from Skermer. It was an illustrated lesson "How to get goals."

Before I had left the ground on Saturday someone said to me, "Your prophecy's come true. He's done the hat trick." I now make another prophecy. Barring injury, Simms will be in the first six goal-scorers of the League at the end of the season. His best form is restored, and he is heaps wiser than he was when he made his world's record in 1916 in the London Combination. He owes much to his companions, as he is first to admit, and I believe that if he would give Bookman as much work as he gives Sid Hoar, he would be even more successful. So far as I can see that is the only drawback. At Selhurst Bookman was for a long period the life and soul of the attack. Last Saturday he got very few passes, and many of them were poorly timed, yet when he did he also gave the spectators a thrill of pleasure by the way in which he raced past the opposition. You cannot expect Bookman to try to knock spots off a player like Gray, but it should be possible so to utilise him that Gray's weight is of no avail against the sprinter. Mathieson, too, who is now giving us something of what we expected from him, would add to the merit of his play by fifty per cent. if he were to give his partner a run, instead of himself holding the ball while the man he has once beaten, recovers position. Of the big Irishman's ability I have always had the highest opinion, and none was more disappointed, not even himself, than I, when he took so long to find his form. I believe that when he fully realises his duty to Bookman he will stand comparison with the best inside left in the south. Higginbotham is always useful, and as a body the three inside men to-day are as hefty and thrustful as any in the south. Sid Hoar early found that the Norwich defence would not allow him to take liberties, and he received several knocks in the first half that shook him up sadly. Walsh's reappearance in the first eleven was successful. That was because the men against him were about his class. He would have found the Palace forwards a very different proposition, but so long as he has only forwards of the rushing type he will be all right. Personally, however, I cannot see any wisdom in moving Parker from a position in which he has given his best exhibitions. There is no comparison between the two, much as I hope to see Walsh rise. Parker is not only skilful, but he is just as fast and untiring as any half-back we have, and it is damaging the effectiveness of the team to move him. He cannot get all the work he wants at left-half, and the best thing that can be done is to place him in the centre and look out for another left-half instead of a centre-half, if the men at command are not satisfactory. Molyneux has earned title to his position by dint of hard work and all round merit, and he improves every week.

Tirrell again showed us that he is an asset, and has quite settled down. His mastery of the visiting right wing on Saturday was almost absolute, while Lennon was in his most dashing mood, and quite an unusual number of supporters are on his list of admirers. Bailey's work was not arduous, and he could count on his fingers the number of saves he had to make.

The Norwich players were triers all through, but one or other side will have to play vastly different if the "Canaries" retain the points at Norwich. Skermer's keeping has already been referred to, while the robust backs were rare protectors. The halves were not at all first-class, and the forwards were lacking in understanding. The teams were:—

Luton Town.—Bailey; Lennon, Tirrell; Molyneux, Walsh, Parker, Hoar, Higginbotham, Simms, Mathieson, Bookman.

Norwich City.—Skermer; B. G. Smith, Gray; Hopewell, Martin, Wilkinson; Dobson, Booth, Dennison, Travers, Austin.

Referee: Mr. F. Leigh, Hanley.