

FOOTBALL NOTES

(BY CRUSADER).

SCENES IN GAME AT LUTON.

Simms' Benefit Match.

LUTON TOWN ----- 1 goal.

PLYMOUTH ARGYLE -- 1 goal.

LUTON TOWN — Bailey; Lennon, Small; Walsh, Parker, Lamb; Hoar, Higginbotham, Simms, Butcher, Bookman.

PLYMOUTH ARGYLE.—Craig; Russell, Aberbury; Logan, Eastwood, Dickinson; Kirkpatrick, Raymond, Sheffield, Toms, Hyatt.

Referee.—H. J. Weber, London.

The performances of the Town during the last month would suggest that they have recognised Lent very thoroughly, and the majority of us can hardly anticipate the Easter programme with anything like confidence. Since the fall to Preston in the Cup-tie they have never recovered their virility, and last Saturday the exhibition was deplorable. Faster and clever individuals, nevertheless they failed to defeat the Argyle, and with a few exceptions, the team were far below the form of the opening two months of the season. From the way they started the game everyone thought that the Argyle would suffer a severe defeat, but the stubborn opposition of the rearguard "Pilgrims" broke the spirit of the home forwards, and play degenerated into a mere scramble, with a lot of unnecessary vigour.

While there was any spirit at all in the home vanguard and middle line, there was always promise of victory, but hope gradually dimmed as the game grew older, and with Russell looming larger and more resolute with every passing minute, confidence and skill alike seemed to forsake the Town players. If they had only kept up the pace and style of the first half-hour they would have won by a large margin, but in sheer hopelessness players began to wander from positions and the final impression was that it had been a poor, scrambling game.

The first goal fell to the Town. It was cleverly worked for by Butcher, and neatly registered by Simms. The former dribbled beautifully, steering the ball past several opponents before tapping it in front of goal for SIMMS to put it into the farther corner of the net. The Town played with great energy afterwards, and the Plymouth defence was hard pressed, but at the end of 35 minutes' play RAYMOND got a chance after a miskick by Lennon, and he drove the ball safely home out of the reach of Bailey. The Argyle goal had many narrow escapes after this, especially from Simms, and even in the last few minutes the Town centre-forward had wretched luck in a great effort to convert a centre from Higginbotham. The Town goal had its narrow shaves, especially in the second half, but on the run of the game they should have won by a margin of about three goals. They failed to do so, and until there is a considerable improvement in method they will not succeed.

The Town defence was very shaky, due chiefly to Lennon's loss of form. None could wish for a sounder back than Lennon was until a month ago, but recently he appears

to have lost the attributes that stamped him as a player of the highest class. He will get them back all right, I do not doubt, but I am afraid it will not be until he has been rested awhile. Bailey was all right, and Tirrell again put up a great game. He was the mainstay of the defence, and when he "took the bit between his teeth," and ventured beyond the usual area of a full back, he never lost possession.

The halves were certainly better than usual, as a line. Walsh gave quite a good display, although I prefer the cleverness of Roe as a more valuable adjunct to effective forward work. Walsh, when he has acquired the knack of keeping the ball on the ground, will be a good half. The lack of that is his drawback at the moment. Parker was powerful in breaking-up, but not so sure as usual in his passing. Lamb was as industrious as usual and did a lot of hard work, while he tried to inspire the forwards with some of his own confidence.

The forwards were skilful and clever in the opening, but the persistent frustration of their efforts by Russell had a weakening effect, and long before the end they were out of gear. Triers to a man, undoubtedly, but wanting in method and hesitant in front of goal. Simms worked his hardest, and he shot well, but had no luck, while he was not served with the ball as well as he might have been. Butcher was his most useful help-mate, and the footwork of the St. Albans player was good throughout. Unfortunately, a player of his footcraft is seldom a great shot, and Butcher is no exception from the rule. Higginbotham did nothing particularly striking until he exchanged positions with Hoar, and after then he put in half-a-dozen centres that might well have brought goals had there been more enterprise in the middle. He showed that he knows the duties of an extreme winger, and I shall be surprised if he does not get a chance there during the holidays. Bookman was unceremoniously handled, and this affected his play, while he has somehow acquired a habit of screwing his centres to such an extent that the ball falls well behind his forwards. Hoar put in a few good runs and centres in the first half, but he showed signs of strain, and, he too, could do with a little holiday.

The Argyle played their usual hard, stick-

day. The Argyle played their usual hard, stick-at-nought game, and the list of indiscretions culminated with the exclusion from the game of Atterbury for a very bad foul on Higginbotham ten minutes from the end! The Plymouth captain might not have been ordered off had he not previously been guilty of an attempt to down Higginbotham, but on that occasion he suffered more than the Luton player. In the second instance he butted Higginbotham with his head and struck him with his knee, and so severely that the Luton player was knocked out and had to receive attention from Billy Lawson. The offence was of such a glaring character that the crowd assumed a threatening attitude, and a policeman escorted the Plymouth player through the crowd at the entrance to the dressing-room. Russell took on the extra burden and did it manfully, and had the satisfaction of retaining the point. The Welsh International certainly was the best back on the field. Rarely did he make the slightest mistake, and he tackled and kicked brilliantly throughout. He kept a heap of work off Craig, and the goalkeeper showed his appreciation by doing all that was asked of him during a strenuous time. He is a cool customer, and finely adapted for the position. Atterbury lacks pace, but he used his wits to advantage, and he is as sure-footed as ever. It was a pity that he should be so indiscreet after doing his work so well. The middle-men were a hard-working trio, and Eastwood put up a good game at centre-half, while the wing halves were very difficult to beat once they had come to an understanding of the Town forwards' tactics. The forwards were very moderate, Toms excepted. He did a great deal of work, and did it cleanly and well. He was the best shot, as well as being the leader in many a raid. Kirkpatrick was a good winger, but Heeps found a more resolute obstacle in Walsh than he had to encounter the previous week.

The match was for Ernest Simms' benefit, and the fine weather attracted a crowd of just over 9,000. Simms was guaranteed £400 by the Club, but they will not have to dip into their banking account to get it. The gate receipts and the proceeds from other efforts should ensure Simms a very substantial sum, probably in the neighbourhood of £750.

Chatting with Ernest Simms on Saturday night the conversation ran not upon the prospects of a big banking account as the result of his benefit. Finance was blotted out of his mind; he was full of regrets because the Town had not won.

How would the following team suit for to-morrow's match at Watford:—Bailey, Semple, Tirrell; Roe, Parker, Lamb; Higginbotham, Mathieson, Simms, Bert Moody, Bookman. That is a suggestion made to me on Saturday night.

Another suggestion received yesterday is similar except for Lennon in his usual place, Roe at centre-half, and Parker at inside left.

Two changes are announced for the Luton League team to play the Biggleswade League to-morrow at Langford. P. Moody (Skefko) will play at right-half in place of B. Joy (Shillington), who cannot leave work, and P. Bird (Commer Cars) at centre-forward in place of D. Ruffett (Stopsley), whose acceptance came too late. W. Brown (Cocoa Works) and H. G. Peck will make the journey as reserves.

Tuesday's team to meet Leighton and District League on the Town ground will play as selected.

George Birdsall, the Harpenden Town left winger, had a trial with Derby County Reserves last Saturday, but the latter lost by a goal to nil at Mansfield.

Harpenden Town won in the semi-final of the Aubrey Cup last Saturday, and now meet London Colney in the final at Red-bourn. Mr. G. A. Dunn's cup should find a lodging at Harpenden for the next twelve months.

