

EXTRAORDINARY GOAL-KEEPING.

WATFORD IN LUCK AT LUTON.

By "CRUSADER."

When the fans of Watford turned up on the Luton Town ground on Saturday afternoon, with handy little black and white flags and rosettes, we were all very pleased to see them. It was a nice little relief to a somewhat murky outlook, and they were very cheerful when the "Magpies" turned out, and grew in light-heartedness before the game had been long in progress, for the visitors were in a lively mood, and gave promise of putting up their customary strong and successful fight. As the game wore on, however, the "paying guests" from Watford became very subdued indeed, and in the second half their harrowing experience seemed to have put them to sleep. As I left the ground one of the "flaggers" remarked to a friend, "Well, we've been a bit lucky today." It was an under-statement; Watford were more than a bit lucky. They have never had so much good fortune in all the other games put together this season. Had Luton got half-a-dozen goals without response they would not have had more than the balance of the play suggested. It was the remarkable work of Williams, who has so often been the main factor in the defeats inflicted upon Luton, that enabled the Hertfordshire team to return with a goal record unmarred, and another point added to their total.

It is many a moon since we saw goal-keeping equal to this at Luton, for the visitors, after being on the defensive for the greater part of the first half, were

PENNERD IN

for long periods in the second, and the assaults were so severe that it did not seem possible their goal could survive. Time after time Williams saved when there seemed to be not the slightest chance of his getting the ball. Risks he took as usual, and they came off as usual, but his skill in getting position to meet the shot, his alacrity in covering up and giving the marksman as little space as possible, were factors that prevented the Town from exacting a very emphatic revenge for the losses they have sustained at the hands of their neighbours during the last few seasons. There was nothing more talked about, or more deserving of eulogy, than the grand work of the Watford keeper.

It was a good game, much better than we imagined it would be when we looked at the angry skies and had our hats threatened by the strong gusty wind before the game. That the elements had an effect there cannot be any question, and for ten minutes in the second half the rain came fiercely and beat in the faces of the Town players, who were then defending the Kenilworth-road end, but I fancy that there would not have been a great deal of science, team science, had the weather been ideal. All the players were too anxious, and, unless they had planned their style according to the exigencies of the occasion, I do not think there is much science about the Watford side.

WE OFTEN GRUMBLE

about the lack of it among the Town players, but Watford's penchant for putting the ball in the air was more pronounced, and their skilful forwards suffered considerably thereby. Their middle men were to blame chiefly, for they seldom gave a pass on the ground, but lunged and booted with little judgment, and that sort of game does not help men of the craftsmanship of Stephenson, White and Foxall. There has not been a game at Luton this season where we have given unqualified praise to our half-backs, but in comparison with those of Watford we were very fortunate.

We caught only fleeting glimpses of the cleverness of the three forwards mentioned, but I believe that if the middle lines had been reversed we should have seen very much more. This faulty department made all the difference to the amount of work that the respective goalkeepers had to do, for valiant as were Horsman and Johnson at back, and I have never seen the former play better, they would have been super-men to have stemmed consistently the speedy and workmanlike movements of the Town forward line.

And I shall always think that penalties might have been justly awarded against Johnson, Poole and Horsman, the first-named for his manner of bringing down Green in the first half, and the other two for "hands." But it

WOULD HAVE BEEN TRAGIC

for Williams to have been beaten after his great game, and the crowd, with whom he is ever a favourite because of his consistently good play against Luton, showed their appreciation of him in whole-hearted manner. For the first time I have nothing but praise for the hefty Horsman, who must, I imagine, be a descendant of the Norsemen. There was more polish about his play and nothing to cavil about in his tackling. Johnson was good, but he did not equal the rubicund right back. To them, next to Williams, chief credit is due. The middle men were full of good intention, and got through a huge amount of work, but their judgment left a good deal to be desired. Poole changed places with Smith in the second half, but neither was so good as in the first moiety. Toone did most work, but Carter's play had not so many jagged edges. The forwards I have referred to, Mummery flickered out after a robust beginning, and on the whole the honours rested with White and Foxall.

Gibbon played the fourth game without losing a goal, but his was a holiday compared with Williams' afternoon. Till was brilliant again, and has now thoroughly established himself as a prime favourite with the crowd. He won the admiration of the Watford critics. Anderson we all like better every game he plays, and I have come to the conclusion that he would play well anywhere in the team. There is the hall-mark of class in all he does, and I have no hesitation in saying that on his present form he is

THE BEST CAPTURE

the club have made from Scotland since the war.

The middle men were better than against Aberdare, but that was perhaps due to the deficiencies in the other middle line, for it is easier to challenge possession when the ball is up in the air than otherwise. Jennings soon had Mummery collared, and White alone of the inside men was capable of holding his own with him. Walker did much better than the week before, his anticipation showing improvement, and he gave more heed to the needs of his forwards. Millar maintained his form, and in his tussles with the lively Stephenson he held his own very well indeed.

The forward work was good, and none did better than Green. Now that he is settling down he promises to become a useful member of the attack. Now and then he roamed a little, but his control was better than ever it has been, and he nursed Sid Hoar very nicely. The latter responded well, and were it not for the heavy handicap of his damaged ankle he would be right on top of his best form. Butcher and Hoten worked well again, and led Toone a rare dance. Hoten needs to cultivate a better centre, but his pace, control and strength are as valuable on the wing as they were inside. Kerr has struck a bad patch, apparently, so far as shooting is concerned. His distribution is better, but we did not want him to lose his shooting abilities. He missed several easy chances on Saturday, and it is now his turn to come along with the match-winning goals he showed he could get a few weeks ago.

LUTON TOWN Nil

WATFORD Nil

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

WATFORD. — Williams; Horsman, Johnson; Toone, Poole, Carter; Stephenson, Smith, Mummery, White, Foxall.
Referee: Mr. R. R. Crump, London.