

CLASH AT CATFORD.

Luton Town Bring Away a Point.

KERR'S CHARACTERISTIC GOAL.

(By "CRUSADER.")

At Catford on Saturday.

CHARLTON ATHLETIC 1
LUTON TOWN 1

CHARLTON.—Wood; Smith (N.), Herod; Rees, G. H. Armitage, Goodman; Richards, Steele, Thomson, Ayres, Smith (S.).

LUTON.—Gibbon; Graham, Till; Walker, Jennings, Millar; Hoar, Butcher, Kerr, Reid, Hotten.

Referee: Mr. R. G. Rudd, London.

"The Mount" is the title they have rightly given to the new ground of Charlton Athletic at Catford. It is so high that, in the words of the old song, "You could see to Covent Garden if it wasn't for the houses in between." On arriving there is no sign of a football ground apart from the red and white flag that flies from a tower-capped hotel managed by W. Bridgeman, contemporaneous with George Butcher at West Ham. The pitch is a plateau some thirty feet above the street level; galvanised iron fencing and dressing-rooms are on the "ground floor," so to say, and you must either make a dash of steps in order to view the match. The area of the estate is figured at nine acres, and terraces are being built on two sides, while preparations are being made for the erection of stands. The Charlton directors have not yet benefited by moving to Catford. They may have a better ground than that at Charlton in a few years' time, but much more money will have to be spent than was here thought about in Luton.

The ground is suffering badly, and there were holes in it that were very dangerous, and with the surface as hard as iron, and

VERY ROUGH AND BUMPY.

ground passing with any sort of accuracy was out of the question, and the running ball could very seldom be judged with certainty.

Moreover, much missionary work will have to be done at Catford before the crowd can be regarded as up to the average of football crowds. On Saturday they barracked Hotten unmercifully throughout the second half, and one would have expected a referee as experienced as Mr. Rudd to have said something to the crowd on the "stand" side. Millar also came in for ungentlemanly treatment, and the temper of the spectators was reflected in no small degree in the indications of some of the Charlton players. Not a player of the home side required the trainer's serious attention, but Fred Westgarth had to attend to Graham twice, Millar twice, Walker, and Kerr, and both Hoar and Hotten were fortunate not to sustain severe injury. Not one escaped bruise and abrasion.

In the opening stages there did not appear to be much prospect of such a result for the Town, for the Athletic started at a great pace. There was so much nippiness and skill in their movements that the lot of Gibbon promised to be unenviable. They deserved to score two minutes after the start, for Thomson applied his head to a centre from Richards and the ball struck the upright with Gibbon well beaten, and then Jennings hooked the ball clear of danger. A dash to the other end was quickly dealt with, and then the home left got away and Smith kicked hard across. There appeared to be no danger, for Till had the ball well covered, but at the vital moment it was diverted by a bump, and THOMSON had the easiest of chances to take the ball in his stride and shoot past Gibbon. It was a bit of bad luck for Till, and the handful of Luton spectators thought he was to blame, but from where I sat, almost on the touch-line and well in that half of the field, he was as helpless as Gibbon. The Town were slow and cumbersome hereabouts, and when they attempted to get away

THE ROBUST METHODS

of the home defenders were successful. Gibbon brought off a great one-handed save from Ayres, and there was need of vigorous resistance, for the home players plunged fiercely into the fray.

Then Herod and Butcher gave one of the nearest bits of passing of the game, but the last pass travelled too fast, and Hoar could not overtake it. The Town were gradually improving, but the Athletic were the better side for some time. There was menace to the home goal when Butcher forced a corner, and Hoar placed it well, Wood saving smartly when three of the Town forwards tried to rush him. Graham was outwitted by the home left wing, but Walker made a brilliant recovery, and when he set his wing going the crowd exhorted Goodman to play the game, for he badly fouled Kerr. The home defenders were getting a bit excited as the Town began to open out the game, and in one raid Reid drove in a beautiful sweeping shot that nearly

eluded the arms of Wood. Jennings urged on the Town by dashing work, and play became even, and each end was visited in turn. The home forwards showed clockwork movement, but the Town forwards were fast, and by saving the ball both well. Reid once drove out to Hoar, and the latter centred for Butcher to shoot in promptly, but Wood was on the alert. Gibbon was not troubled very much, and when Kerr and Butcher burst through the former hit the side net with a hot ball.

With the Town getting the measure of the opposition the play became unpleasant. Graham was knocked out. Herod used his hands to stop Hoar when the latter had cleared all the opposition, but the Town captain sent the free kick well over the bar. Ayres made a fine solo effort, but when he came to shoot the ball was not there, Walker having taken it from his toe. Till let through Steele after dallying, but only a corner was forced, and that was cleared. Reid made a daring rush to the other end, and Smith was lucky to snatch the ball from his toe, and two corners fell to the Town, the home goal nearly falling from each of Hoar's kicks. From the second Kerr, Butcher and Reid each had shots rebound, and finally Millar had a shot, and Wood beat Hoar in

A TUMULTUOUS SCENE

in the goal. Of Hotten not much had been seen, the wind carrying play to the other flank. Now he made a splendid run, and got in a shot that struck the bright post, but the referee gave a free kick against him for upsetting Smith. Goodman scraped Butcher's feet from under him as the Town forward was dribbling clear, and from the free kick Hoar gave to Butcher, but the home defenders packed the goal and the ball was got away. Butcher was again in the picture, and from Hoar's pass fired in a high shot which Wood caught under the bar. Charlton then woke up again, and Graham and Till were kept busy to the interval, which came with the score:—

CHARLTON ATHLETIC 1
LUTON TOWN 0

There was much liveliness about the Town attack when the game was resumed, and the right wing at once threatened danger. Wood ran out and cleared, and then Richards got clean away on the home right, but Till forced him to shoot hurriedly, and the ball went over. Butcher sent Hoar away, and from the centre Hotten had hard luck with a shot that rebounded from Smith. Another fast raid by the Town right wing found Butcher once more out of luck, for he shot in grandly, but the ball ran along the bar and went out. Charlton began to get anxious, and there were many fouls. Gibbon was rarely called upon, except when his backs returned the ball to him, Hoar and Butcher again led a period of pressure, and in saving the ball in for Reid to turn it into the goal, Wood and Butcher got there before Kerr. A couple of corners to the Town were followed by a fine sprint by S. Smith, and he got right away to put in a beautiful centre, but Gibbon saved. The Town halves were now taking an important part in the game, and

CLEVER TRIANGULAR WORK

by Butcher, Hoar and Walker was spoilt by Goodman committing a very bad foul on Walker, the latter having to be carried off for attention. His stocking was torn from knee to ankle, and the force of the kick would have broken his leg had it caught him in front instead of at the side. Goodman had no chance to get the ball, and it was funny that the linesman, consulted by the referee, advised "no offence," while the spectators were telling Goodman to play the game. He had no earthly chance of getting the ball when he fouled Walker, and the latter must have got through. While he was off, Gibbon made a glorious save from Steele, who shot at point blank range, and there was a loud cry of "Goal!" as the ball was lifted over the bar in mastery style. Walker returned, and the Town again made progress, but Herod put a strangle hold on Hoar, and again the spectators yelled at the home back, while the linesman advised the referee that there was no offence. On the other flank, Rees and Hotten had a set-to which required the intervention of the referee, and when play was resumed Millar stopped Richards in clever fashion. The Town were now having the better of the game, but the tactics of the home defenders were neither pretty nor easy to overcome. Then, however, came a lovely goal by Kerr. When there did not appear to be the slightest possibility, Walker held up S. Smith, and transferred to Jennings, who put out to the right. With his attention drawn to Hoar, Herod, standing well out of his own penalty area, failed to get his head to the ball coming from Jennings. KERR pounced on the ball before Herod could

recover. Smith ran across to stop him, and in spite of attempted trips and three occasions the Town centre-forward maintained his foot and the ball. He was forced to the right, and just when the chance he had made appeared to be gone, he shot with great force at an acute angle, and, although Wood touched, the pace was too much, and the ball crashed into the net for

THE FINEST GOAL.

Kerr has scored this season. This was 28 minutes after the restart, and Charlton did not like it. Millar and Kerr were each knocked out, and had to receive attention, and Charlton made desperate efforts to get ahead again, but met a stern defence. Steele was once right through, but Gibbon made a wonderful save, and the Town went to the other end. Hotten twice shot just wide, and Reid dropped the ball in for Butcher to give Wood a high shot, which was got away. The Town were on the aggressive when the end came, but the score was 1-0. Charlton played better than at Luton, showed much cleverness and a good knowledge of the difficult ground, which sorely handicapped the Town forwards. Wood did well for them. Smith was the better back, Armitage played finely at centre-half, and all the forwards were good, S. Smith and Steele being the pick. The halves and backs were inclined to take liberties, and Mr. Rudd needs to keep a closer watch for such fouls as were committed by Rees and Goodman. After a poor start, the Town made a fine recovery, and fully deserved the point. After the first half-hour they were the more dangerous side, for there was more vim and swing about their work. Gibbon again kept goal splendidly, and his backs, if not reaching their best, were steady under pressure, and gave little away. Considering the wretched state of the ground they both did fine work, and there was little to choose between them. After the early stages Till dropped the dribbling fault, and with good effect. Graham had a warm hand in Smith, but he held his own, while Till's chief trouble, Steele, found the little back a tough proposition.

THE MAIN IMPROVEMENT

was in the middle line. Jennings' return to the pivotal position worked wonders, there was much more vim in defence and attack, and he never once got at cross-purposes. Thomson almost faded out of sight, and had very few shots at goal. On the right flank, Walker was prone to wander into the middle in the first ten minutes, but when he realised that S. Smith was a damaging factor, he settled down, and in the second half he was brilliant. Time after time he held up the Charlton left wing, and his feeding of Butcher and Hoar was very good, and led to this being the better wing. On the other hand, Hoar was very fast and Steele very tricky, and when trying to look after both was biting off more than he could chew, but in the second half, concentrating on Richards, he did sterling work, and consequently was of greater service to Reid and Hotten. Like Jennings and Walker, he also contrived to get somewhere near goal when the fight was at its hardest.

Kerr broke his long spell with a characteristic goal. Had the ground been in better condition, the Town would have got through on two or three occasions, but frequently the ridgy surface robbed him at the critical moment. He swung the ball out well, and came much nearer his best. The return of Butcher to the right wing was an improvement in every way. He had more shots at goal than any other forward, and was distinctly unlucky. He got more work out of Hoar, and the latter responded well, but, as with all the forwards, the lively ball played such tricks that many promising chances were frustrating. Hoar had never played better in a wing position. He looked after Hotten splendidly, passing on the ground, and tackling the backs with plenty of courage and dash. Hotten did many good things, but had an unhappy time with the crowd. From this aspect alone one would have liked to see some of his efforts succeed, for in the second half the spectators kept up a constant rattle against him. It was well for the home team that Rees and Smith never gave the Town winger much scope, for his strong dashes in conjunction with Reid were always dangerous.

The play of the side as a whole was much nearer the pre-Christmas successes. There were only 3,000 spectators, although the weather was delightful.

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