

GREAT STRUGGLE AT LUTON.

TOWN JUST OVERCOME PALACE.

SHANKLY'S HAT TRICK.

(By "CRUSADER.")

LUTON TOWN 3 goals
CRYSTAL PALACE 2 goals

LUTON. — Purdy; Till, Graham; Richards, Jennings, Millar; Miller, Shankly, Littlewood, Dennis, Thompson.

PALACE. — Harper; Blake, Cross; McCracken, Hamilton, Greener; Harry, Turner, Cherrett, Blakemore, Clarke.

Referee: Mr. A. L. Grinstead, East Ham.

That a malign fate in the person of the referee interposed between them and victory was the feeling of the Palace when they left Luton on Saturday night. The result was in doubt right to the final whistle, and the Palace had some reason to think that they had been hardly dealt with, although the Town players and spectators generally would not join with them in blaming the referee. On the other hand the home team and the crowd were often protesting against decisions. That Mr. Grinstead made blunders is true, but there was only one very serious matter as far as I could see. "Play to the whistle" is now a maxim of football, but when the whistle calls for a cessation of play it is only natural that play should cease. On one occasion on Saturday Mr. Grinstead whistled for an offence committed by a Luton defender, Jennings, I believe, and the Town players stopped. The Palace player in possession did not stop, however, and he was allowed to go on and take a point-blank drive at goal. Had Purdy not been quick-witted a goal would have been registered. For the rest of the game, I think that

THE BLUNDERS

were fairly equally apportioned.

The Palace players were grumbling once because he did not whistle when one of their players handled just before Shankly scored his third goal. They would have had good cause had he whistled up the game, but he did not do so. They also complained when he disallowed a goal in the second half because Purdy had been improperly obstructed, yet he was right in the goal himself and must have seen the offence. The Town players were just as vehement in their protests when he gave the penalty against Joe Till for handling, but there was not much question about it, and I fancy the appeal to the linesman, had the referee consented to the request of the Town players, would have been answered against them.

For upwards of an hour there was not much to complain about in the conduct of the players, for they fought fairly and keenly, but consequently upon Dennis being roughly ill-used by Hamilton,

SOME FEELING

crept into the game, and the Palace centre-half and inside left were spoken to. I fancy that a milder rebuke was addressed to Richards during a tussle with Blakemore, who objected to the Town player making the most of his avoidpouls. It was almost natural, however, considering the pace and the keenness of the players, that there should be one or two "incidents," and everybody will agree that, all things considered, there was not a lot to call forth condemnation.

The Palace were hardly deserving of defeat. Had their defence been equal to their halves and wings they would not have lost, but the team was not well balanced. In combination of attack they showed more skill than the Town, but the latter had the pull in the matter of industry and the never-say-die spirit. It was this enabled the Town to win, and it was not merely in attack or in defence, but the complete team. There was refreshing

TEAM SPIRIT.

every man overcoming his hardest for his side, and this often overcomes skill.

By their manner of opening the Palace might have been at the top of the League rather than near the foot. They soon gave Purdy something to think about, for their wingers were quick-footed and the inside men and half-backs saw to it that the ball went to the men best positioned. It was some time before the Town could claim an equal share of the game, but gradually they asserted superiority, swinging the ball about and keeping the visiting defence on the run. Following several fine saves by Harper the pressure was rewarded, and it was the work of Richards that brought the crowd to their feet, rather than the fact that Shankly scored. Richards got hold somewhere near the middle line. Away he went, and

COMPLETELY SURPRISED

the Palace defenders because he did not pass to Miller immediately. When tackled he did so, but was nicely placed for the return. Thinking he was going to take his chance, the Palace defenders converged upon him, but he neatly left the ball to SHANKLY, who had a comfortable opening and made the most of it.

Before the Palace had recovered from the shock the Town came along again. Thompson and Dennis started the trouble after some splendid defensive work by Graham and Millar. Dennis lunged the ball right across the field, and Miller dashed in and caught the ball on the line, and before the Palace defenders could recover he had lofted it perfectly on to the waiting head of SHANKLY, who nodded past the helpless Harper. For a few minutes the Palace defence seemed beaten to a frazzle, and only

THE ALERT HARPER

averted two or three more goals before the interval.

Whether or not there had been a lecture to the Palace defence during the interval I do not know, but the whole team resumed with a determined air, and it required all the strength and skill of the Town halves and rearguard to keep them at bay. The Town forwards were again somewhat slow in getting into their stride, and a heavy burden fell on the defence. Purdy behaved magnificently, but the Palace got no more than their deserts when they scored. This was due to a misunderstanding between the Town backs. Till was taking the man with the idea that

Graham, who was closing across, would take the ball, but the latter was undecided what Till wanted him to do, and the consequence was that Blakemore nipped round Till and centred across goal to TURNER, who gave Purdy no chance to save.

The Town responded with spirit, and the forwards again began swinging the ball about, and both wings were frequently in action, but Harper was safe. A Palace raid found the Town goal

A SURGING, SWAYING MASS

of players, and it was during this struggle that the Palace claimed a goal, but the Town got a free-kick on the goal line. The Town forwards then got away on the right, and stirring scenes were witnessed at the Palace end. Dennis was stunned in a charge by Hamilton, and the Town player was carried off, but Willie Barr soon brought him round. An attack on the Town left wing had the Palace defenders at sea, and SHANKLY had an easy task to slip the ball past Harper for the third goal—his hat trick. The Palace were not done with, however, and it was during a terrific onslaught, when the ball criss-crossed the Town goal time after time, and after Purdy had saved several times, that Till "knocked on" close to the post. There was a turbulent scene round the official for a few moments, but he was firm, and BLAKEMORE easily scored from the penalty spot.

Thence to the end it was a grim struggle, with the Palace lasting quite as well as the Town. Purdy saved splendidly again and again, and the advantage of weighty men was realised more than once when Richards and Jennings

BARRED THE WAY.

The Town made a few attacks, and once Miller only just failed to score with a fast shot that just topped the bar. The desperate efforts of the Palace were frustrated, and the end of the game found the score as above.

The Palace had a brilliant right-winger in Harry, a very fine shot in Blakemore, and their flank halves were very clever. The backs were apt to waver under pressure, but Harper was a good goalkeeper.

Purdy's magnificent goalkeeping elicited round after round of applause. Some of his saves were thrilling, and he certainly had more ticklish work than Harper. Graham put up a grand show at left-back, and whether he plays well or ill at half-back, this display only serves to confirm my opinion that he is a natural full back. His powerful kicking, and his

WELL-TIMED DASHES

were invaluable. Till was not so prominent as in most games recently, but there was class about his work all the time save the one blunder. At half we had the necessary weight and vigour. Every yard of ground was contested, and against a clever and elusive attack every man did well.

The combination forward left something to be desired, perhaps, but if it is to bring goals to the tune of three a match one will not trouble about the fancy work. There is always the desire for pretty footwork, but our first concern is the score. Miller and Shankly were a clever pair, and the latter's hat trick was a popular feat, though he would be the first to acknowledge the help he received from his colleagues. Shankly gets better every week, and if he is not on the way to an International cap it will surprise me. Miller will help him to get it, too. Littlewood is another of

THE YOUNG BRIGADE

that is on the rise, and while he cannot yet be regarded as a Simms, he has talent that will come out with coaching and experience. Dennis again proved that he can play an inside forward game, but he did not shoot so often as we like to see, and Thompson will soon be persuaded that he has possibilities as a winger that he did not accord to himself.

What I like about the present side, however, is the enthusiasm and whole-hearted effort, and there does not appear to be a single pessimist among them. The 6,000 spectators had full value for their money, and a considerable number of them will be cheering the team on at Brentford next Saturday.

ST. ALBANS CITY.

"Sphinx" writes:—"St. Albans City F. C. committee added a little to their knowledge by Saturday's friendly match with the London University eleven, which the former won by 5-2. A rearrangement of the City forward line had a most successful issue for V. Rowe at inside-right, as he scored three goals, W. Minter and H. Figg getting the others. W. Buckingham and K. Miller, as the left wing, made an ideal combination. If the latter can be persuaded to hold the inside position, it would solve one of the committee's problems. The right wing was a real surprise. P. Pierce has never played better, and Rowe was a success, judged by the goals he scored. W. H. Minter had an off day. A. G. Bishop, of the Air Force, is, I understand, appearing in the club's colours next Saturday against Nunhead at inside-right. In what way can the City defence be improved? W. Smith, who has lately had a bad turn, might be given a rest; P. Bird would, no doubt, ably fill that position, and young White, of Hitchin, could be tried at centre-half. It is certain that success will not be achieved unless there are some big changes, and more weight, in the City team."

BATFORD WIN.

Visiting the G.I.F. (Luton) on Saturday, Batford Old Boys won by 3-1. GRANT put through his own goal and gave the G.I.F. the lead, but GUNNEL, equalised from a penalty-kick. GUNNEL, got a second penalty shot home in the second half, and HOUGH scored the third for the Boys.