

WATFORD WIN.

LUTON TOWN'S MISFORTUNE: GRAHAM INJURED.

New Goalkeeper's Impressive Display.

By *Crusader.*

WATFORD 2

LUTON 1

WATFORD.—Yates; Prior, Fletcher; F. Smith, E. Smith, Strain; Stephenson, Warner, Edmonds, Swan, Daniels.

LUTON.—Harper, Graham, Till; Gordon, Rennie, Millar; Pointon, Thomson, Thompson, Woods, Dennis.

Referee.—Mr. W. Musther, London.

Good-bye, October! Every football follower in Luton will say that most fervently. It has been a disastrous month: full of troubles and loss. Whereas the end of September found all of us aglow with anticipation, we embark upon chill November loaded with anxiety and misgiving. One little beam warmed us at the end of the month—the acquisition of a new goalkeeper. Whoever was responsible for the move that secured William Harper last week made a very real step towards the retention of the confidence of the supporters. Let there be no mistake about this; unless the followers of the club find that weaknesses in the teams are remedied, the "gates" will diminish very considerably.

THE SPLENDID START

made by the first eleven brought much better attendances, but the failures during the last month have had the inevitable effect. Misfortune, in the shape of injuries, has smitten the club very hard, and evoked the sympathy of the true enthusiast, but the average follower does not trouble a lot about that; he wants to see matches won, and the only way to keep his interest is to see that he gets what he wants. After the game at Watford I am more convinced than ever that the chief need at the moment is going to cost money, but it will be wise investment. Harper's advent, if his form at Watford is a fair sample, is

A GIFT FROM THE GODS.

but every position cannot be filled so cheaply. If so, the transfer system would never operate.

On Saturday morning a friend at Watford rang up on the 'phone and told me that Watford would win. I differed, for, to be candid, I believe the Town have talent enough to take the points from any side in the League, provided conditions and circumstances are equal. At Watford we had what we have so often seen this season, the Town making a slow start and in arrears at half-time, but I think the home side had pretty well shot their bolt, and it was their good fortune that Graham could take

NO FURTHER PART.

Thus the Town, while holding their own pretty well, all things considered, could not pull out the extra bit that has pulled them through so often. Graham received an injury that will probably keep him out of the side for a week or two, and so the Town had but ten men for the whole of the second half.

Watford were the better side in the first forty-five, and the man chiefly responsible for the damage was a Lutonian by birth—Edmonds. He proved once more that the backbone of a side nowadays requires strength and vigour as much as anything else. Constantly hustling the Town defenders, it was solely due to

EDMONDS' ENTERPRISE

that Watford scored four minutes from the start. An aimless kick by one of the home halves went over Graham's head. The back managed to get the ball, but could not control it for the clearance, and Edmonds, pushing and bustling from behind, knocked Graham off the ball and managed to get it close to the upright as Harper came to bar the shot, but Edmonds is a wary old hand, and, instead of shooting, slipped the ball across to WARNER, who was quite unmarked, and had only to tap it into the net.

Watford's goal had

A NARROW ESCAPE

in the subsequent play, for Yates was dispossessed by Norman Thomson, and the ball was on the ground between goalkeeper and forward, though the latter could not see it until the goalkeeper had recovered it. Before the game the Town players were grumbling about the rough state of the ground, which was very lumpy, and attempts to pass on the carpet were almost useless. Watford, on the other hand, swung the ball about, hitting it hard, and rushing the Town backs. Harper had plenty to do, much more than Yates, and behaved magnificently. His judgment in positioning, safe fielding, and quick clearances won the approbation of the Luton supporters, and he was

CHEERED TO THE ECHO.

Yates made a few saves, and the Town had several corners, but the ball was usually sent high over the bar, or well wide. There was not much in it in the last quarter of an hour before the interval, and we were looking forward to the halt when Graham met with his accident. There had been a scuffle near the Town goal, but the ball was got away. Swan was on the point of taking a shot when Graham cleared, and the forward's boot met the back's skin. Graham was carried off, and the ambulance men and Billy Barr had only just begun to attend to him when the whistle went for the interval. Graham was carried off in a rug, and it was feared that he had sustained an accident similar to that which befell Richards last season, but examination proved otherwise. Still, it was

A BAD JOB

for the Town, as with only ten men the machinery had to be rearranged. Gordon went to full back, Norman Thomson to

right-half, and Woods came over to the right of Jim Thompson. That was how they lined up when the second half opened with the score:—

WATFORD 1

LUTON 0

Edmonds' opportunism was in evidence immediately the game was resumed. Till made a weak kick, and EDMONDS got possession. Tackled by Till, he managed to retain the ball, and though Harper ran out and narrowed the gap, the Watford centre-forward shot to the goalkeeper's left hand. The ball struck the upright and dribbled over the line. In some respects it was

A LUCKY GOAL.

but Edmonds had done more than any other forward to deserve his score.

It was some time before the Town got moving at all well, but eventually they adopted the tactics of the home side—kicking the ball forward and racing the backs for possession. Still, the play was of a scrambling character, and individual dashes were so well covered that the crowd grew cold. About midway through the half the Town opened out strongly, and Yates had a lot to do. Pointon was the chief instrument of aggression, and initiated the attack that succeeded. The ball went out to the left wing, and was crossed in front of goal two or three times before it came on the bounce to Norman THOMSON. He skilfully

LOBBED THE BALL

to the farther end of the goal, over the goalkeeper's head, and Jim Thompson and Dennis rushed it into the net. It appeared as if Jim Thompson had scored, but the referee told me after the game that the ball was over the line at least a couple of feet before Jim Thompson touched it, and the goal belonged to Norman Thomson.

In the last quarter of an hour, Harper was tested to the full, and saved splendidly. Swan once headed into the net, but was well offside. Woods had a glorious chance of equalising, but his shot went straight to Yates, who caught it and cleared, and the end came with the score as above.

CHIEF CREDIT

for the success of Watford belongs to Edmonds. A few weeks ago it was possible he might come to Luton, but Watford took him, and he has paid for himself already. He was too tough for Rennie, and though he did not get in many shots, led the onslaughts, and was always on the premises when there was a chance of scoring. Harper won the admiration of the crowd, and I venture the opinion that every Luton supporter who saw the game, will now tick off that department as satisfactory. He played splendidly, and though it is early to throw bouquets, and I am old enough to know that he will make mistakes if he stays long enough, without any hesitation I can say that he went about his work with more

STYLE AND CONFIDENCE

than any goalkeeper I have seen under the Luton bar since the war days, when the club could borrow or commandeer players.

At back, Graham did not begin well, but was going great guns when he met with his mishap. Till made the error that gave Watford the second goal, but played a fine game as usual, and had no equal among the backs. At half, Millar came back to his best, and overcame the elusive Stephenson time after time. It is curious how Millar always does well against this, probably the most expensive of Watford's players. In the second half he took

A CONSIDERABLE PART

in the attacks on the Watford goal, and played well throughout. Gordon did much effective work, and when he took Graham's place, the home left wing found him more difficult to beat than ever. Rennie is not the player he was last back end. He is of the right build, and can play football, but lacked the spirit necessary to overcome Edmonds.

The forwards were troubled by the rough state of the pitch. Pointon did not get enough work in the first half. Norman Thomson was too intent upon feeding Jim Thompson, and in this connection I would point out that

THE MAIN CRITICISM

against John Shankly last season was that he ran towards his partner and then passed to him when he was covered. Thomson does the other thing—sweeps the ball inside when everybody is expecting a pass to the wing. Perhaps he overdid it, but several times when he let Pointon have it, the whistle went for offside. Pointon was the most effective unit of attack in the second half. It was Norman Thomson's turn to get a goal. Jim Thompson did not reach his best by any means, but was well covered by the opposition. Woods was clever, but painfully slow, and Dennis, though better than the previous week, still much below his best.

For Watford, Yates appears to be a useful goalkeeper, and Fletcher was a shrewd defender. Strain was the pick of the middle men, and Edmonds the outstanding forward.

There were upwards of 11,000 spectators.