

Crusader Comments

ON LUTON TOWN'S VISIT TO WATFORD

MORE and more as the years pass am I realising the indiscretions of past years, and particularly in my attitude towards those people responsible for football clubs. Possibly a youthful fondness for Robert Burns led me to accept literally his assertion that "the rank is but the guinea stamp," and to believe that all men were but men. In later years I came to know that there were women who were nearly men, and men who were nearly angels—journalists chiefly—but in general I regarded all those who wore long trousers as being men, or, at worst, on the way to that noble state. Nor did the arrival of plus fours alter that understanding to a vital degree.

At Watford on Saturday there dawned a new consciousness—that there are men and super-men, and I fancy George Bernard Shaw must have found his super man at Watford. My passport, duly scrutinised, had taken me through the outer gate and an inner door, but the stairs to the Press-box were guarded by one whom I hope will never get hold of the keys of heaven, or there will be precious little chance for newspaper men. Though he had to look up to, he tried to impress me with the fact that I had to look up to him. Some would have called him pompous, but I have not the nerve to go beyond saying that he was humorous.

He seemed to think Luton was not important enough to have a newspaper of its own, let alone three, and I fancy it was the shock of being told that there was one paper that wanted a report that very evening of that match that caused him to lose self-consciousness or self-importance for the moment. Anyway, I stole past with a deeper sense of humility than usual, and after passing a fourth scrutineer of tickets, I was admitted, breathless, faint, and more or less grateful to a seat in the grand circle.

Just how many Luton followers there were I do not know, but there seemed to be quite as many as there were for Watford and I am quite sure the Hertfordshire club's followers do not show the same enthusiasm when (incidentally, I hope the Watford Pressmen will find an easier passage) their team comes to Luton. I wish they did, for I doubt if there are two bodies of supporters anywhere that get along so well together. A certain amount of banter is heard, but always of

the most cheerful kind, and there is not the slightest doubt in my mind that while each section wishes its first favourites to win this game, there is a very real and most kindly interest in the welfare of the other club. I believe that Luton are second favourites at Watford, just as Watford are second favourites at Luton, and if we cannot succeed in any enterprise, then we do hope the Watford fellows will do so.

Mr. Ernest Small, the referee, evidently expected a fight that would be more than keen, and was quite enthusiastic about the sportsmanship of the players. There were one or two of each side that forgot themselves now and then, but in the main, though there was plenty of shoulder, the play was clean. Watford won because they accepted the best chance of the game, but in the matter of opportunities Luton had the more. If young Brown had been a little more experienced he would have had two or three goals, and on one occasion he was certainly more unlucky than at fault when Holland made a brilliant save.

It was Watford's game in the early stages, and the Town had to thank Harford and his backs for sterling work, and though the home side were never thoroughly outplayed—their rearguard saw to that—there were periods when the rest of the side were almost overwhelmed by the rushes of the Town. It is true that these advances were more determined than scientific, but they lent spice to the game, and often got the home defenders in such tangles that it seemed they could not fail to score. Unfortunately, the last and all-important piece was wanting, and the Town retired without a goal.

It was rather galling that the one goal scored should be obtained in such a manner, brilliant though the making of it. The Town had been bombarding the home goal for a few minutes after the interval when a well placed pass by Reynolds, the old Luton Reserves' player, sent Barnett away with a clear run. He kept control splendidly while going at a pace sufficient to stall off Clark, his only pursuer, and then lifted the ball just too high for Harford's attempt to intercept, and JAMES nodded it into goal.

Time after time the Town swept down on the home goal, but Clement and Davison defended gallantly, and when they failed Holland prevailed. He had a

good match, for when his skill was unavailing his good fortune held, and that was how the Town were prevented from scoring—that and their own feeble finishing. On the other hand, whenever McBain got his team pulling together they gave a lot of trouble, and their spasmodic raids made the Town backs and Harford pull out their best.

We keep saying that our lads will do better, but seven matches have been played, and with a sixth of the programme completed we are not in a very happy position. I think we shall do better than Watford unless they have something more to show, but that does not dispose of our own disappointments. At the moment the team seems to be composed of units rather than well defined departments working in co-operative spirit, and it is in this way that corrective measures must be taken.

Harford kept goal very well indeed, and made two or three brilliant saves. His backs worked as hard and as determinedly as ever, while the appearance of Fraser brought more life into the middle line, and Brown gave trouble to the opposing defence, even if he did not actually lead the line. Clark was a vigorous pivot, and got through much more work than he has done in any other game this season, while Hale had an inexhaustible fund of energy.

Brown will continue to improve. He is much better now than I expected, but it is a moot point whether he is ready for that important position. Yardley was virtually the leader of the attack, and he did rare work, while Page improved on the best he has given hitherto. The wingers were not consistent, but the ball was not served up to them nicely or often.

Watford have a useful goalkeeper in Holland, and Davison always plays well against the Town. Clement also showed real ability, but it was the old hand, McBain, that excelled in the middle line. Reynolds did good work, and in attack Barnett was very clever, and James a strong leader.

WATFORD.—Holland (J.); Clement, Davison; Reynolds, McBain, Woodward; Chapman, Barnett, James, Wooliscroft, McWilliams.

LUTON.—Harford; Kingham, Richards; Hale, Clark, Fraser; M'Nestry, Yardley, Brown, Page, Slicer.