

THIS AND THAT

By TRUE BLUE

UP AND DOWN WEDNESDAY NINE TIMES CHAMPIONS

HERE is a query to which I should like somebody to give me a satisfactory answer, because I am by no means certain about it. Does the average football follower like plenty of spice with his soccer meals, or does he prefer to get along with an ordinary menu? Perhaps that isn't a clear-cut question, so I'll put it in another way.

Does it tickle the palate of Mr. Average football fan to be associated with a club which, roughly speaking, spends most of the time between battling for a top place or struggling near the foot of the table, or does he prefer to be a supporter of a club which, for the most part, steers a comfortable, but not so exciting, middle course?

It occurs to me that a part answer could be that it depends on whether the fellow giving it has a weak heart or otherwise. Those exciting, breathless finishes, connected with ups and downs, tops and bottoms, are all right in their way, but many will agree these times can play fast and loose with the nerves.

While some may have difficulty in answering the question of which they prefer—a calm rather than a tempestuous sea—few will require two guesses regarding the club in the forefront of the mind. It is the one also present at today's match at Stamford Bridge, Sheffield Wednesday. Once more we meet the "Owls," as they were once known, with First Division points at stake.

Whether they have liked it or not, the supporters of the Wednesday have had their fair share—or rather more than that—of excitement. The recent exploits of the club provide a reasonable excuse for recalling the Wednesday story the wrong way round.

A Record Rally

During the last ten years the Wednesday have played a sort of shuttlecock game—up down, up down—to an unprecedented extent. For a single season only—that of 1950-51—they stayed in the First Division following promotion. Back again to the top class after one season

lower down, they kept there for three seasons. Relegated again, one season down, two seasons up, one season down and now back among the elite.

Just what all this meant in the way of heart attacks need not be enlarged upon. The followers of Chelsea went through it all, along with the Wednesday players and supporters, in the concluding minutes of the 1950-51 season. You will remember that on the last match day of the campaign Chelsea beat Bolton Wanderers, Wednesday triumphed over Everton by six goals. And when pencils and papers had done their arithmetic job Chelsea kept their place in the top class by goal-average decimals, while Wednesday and Everton went down.

That wasn't the first time, by any means, that this Sheffield club had been through the sink or swim experience. Going back a bit we come to the time when everybody concerned was kept on the rack for weeks, with a much happier end from the Wednesday angle.

Around Easter time in 1928 they were so far in arrears in the points sense that the only question on which came up for discussion, connected with relegation, was which club would go down in company with the Wednesday. Suddenly, however, for no obvious reasons, the Sheffielders began to play like champions rather than wooden spoonists. Of their last eight games in that season they won six and drew the other two.

The upshot of this amazing rally was that Wednesday dodged what had seemed to be the club's inevitable fate. The Spurs went down, and the man above all others whom the people of Sheffield would have been pleased to carry through the streets in a triumphant procession was Jimmy Seed, appointed captain on leaving Tottenham. He started the revival on the White Hart Lane ground.

Won a Brand New Cup

That wasn't the end of an amazing chapter in the Wednesday story. In each of the two following seasons men who