

THE LEAGUE—DIV. III

LUTON TOWN'S QUEER GAME

(By CRUSADER).

LUTON TOWN 2 goals.
BRENTFORD nil.

LUTON TOWN. — Bailey; Lannon, Tirrell; Molyneux, Parker, Cockerill; Hoar, Higginbotham, Simms, Mathieson, Bookman.

BRENTFORD. — Durston; Hodson, Rosier; Elliott, Amos, Morris; Taylor, Smith, Boyne, Spreadbury, Cartmell.

Referee.—R. R. Crump, London.

Bleak House was the Press-box on the Town ground on Saturday. The wind whistled round the balcony and bit noses, ears, and finger-ends, and I was very glad when the final tootle enabled me to gather up my papers and make for the office fire. The wind was not merely rough, but it was bitterly cold, and it was extremely difficult to record the incidents with anything like comfort. In the first half there were plenty, but the second was barren, and some hundreds of people left the ground long before the official closure. In spite of the wind being against them the Town played really good football in the first half, but were quite moderate in the second half, and I am not sure that they would not have done better had they been fighting against the wind for the full course. Certainly Brentford showed no conspicuous cleverness in either half, and as was the case with Norwich, one is left amazed that the Town should ever lose to sides so radically inferior. On last Saturday's form the Town ought to win quite comfortably at Brentford, but experience makes one reticent in prediction.

Brentford are a fine looking set of men, with plenty of vigour and dash, and I thought the referee was far too lenient with some of them, especially in the second half.

On several occasions in this game I think Sid Hoar was lucky to escape hospital lodgings for a month or two, so violently was he attacked by one opponent. Although the quality of the game deteriorated so considerably, I think SIMMS' goal was well worth paying grand-stand price to see. If one could understand the working of a mind like that of Ernest Simms it would make writing easier. Time and again on Saturday he got the ball in circumstances far more conducive to goal-scoring, yet did not get the goal. On this particular occasion Sid Hoar had done some clever work on the wing. Simms had veered over to the right and was actually in the place one might have expected Higginbotham to be. Several players were running towards Simms when Hoar pushed the ball through. Simms adjusted his stride to the pace of the ball but never tried to stop it; he simply let drive and the ball flashed into the net at a terrific pace, from 15 yards' range, and an angle of about 45 degrees. Durston never looked like stopping it, and it was a glorious goal. No wonder the crowd lifted the lid of its noise-box, and the referee stood and gazed in admiration.

tion.

The second goal was also a good one, but not of the same class. Higginbotham had steered the ball past several opponents and might himself have shot, but noticing MATHIESON with a clear opening he unselfishly transferred, and the Irishman deliberately placed the ball and shot hard and low. Durston evidently expected a high shot, and the ball passed between his leg and the upright. Many more goals we should have had if the forwards had shown steadiness and accuracy in front of goal, especially in the second half, but this completed the tally. Durston certainly saved quite a lot of good shots, but, even so, we did not get enough. Against the wind the Town had combined cleverly, and some of the passing was very clean and clever, and the ability to keep the ball on the ground was a great factor in the success. Brentford's strength was also a fault. The individual dashes often gave the home defenders anxious moments, but brought nothing more than theatrical thrills. They did not combine at all well. Neither did they in the second half, but the Town players, while occasionally passing with skill and cleverness, found the ball up in the air too often for their liking and goals would not come. The second half was too scrambling to be interesting and the game was getting old before we saw any really determined and organised attempt to score. Durston, by strenuous effort, and several times by good fortune, kept a clean sheet in that goal, and so the game ended as above.

The Town quite deserved the points, but it would have been more to our liking had they straightened out the goal average. At the end of the first month of the season I said it would take until Christmas to level up, and it will not be done unless we can manage to win at Brentford, for on Saturday week the Town will be engaged in the first round of the Competition Proper of the English Cup. The forwards' play was good enough for more than two goals, and I think that two goals did not in any way reflect the superiority. It seems hard to believe that with all the success won since the first match, only six goals have been scored by the Town more than by opponents. As a result of this win, however, we go up one peg in the Table, and we ought to retain that position next week.

The combination of the forwards and the understanding between the forwards and halves was better because Parker was back at centre-half. It is good to know that many are coming round to the opinion that he is the best centre-half we have. His obstruction was perfected by his smart ground passes to the forwards, who got away time after time as a result of his generalship. Simms again led the forwards with great skill, and his wide passes to the wings and thrusting movements in the centre were exhilarating. Higginbotham and Mathieson played to him skilfully, and the former was very unselfish. Hoar was fast and clever and shone more than Bookman because he had more opportunities. It was very difficult to get the left wing moving because of the wind, and Bookman's chances to shine were few and far between. Molynex again gave a tireless and clean display, and he is a pattern of cleanliness.

and sportsmanship. Cockerill put up a very good game, and I think he should be persevered with for a time. He is strong and fearless, and his chief fault is that he is apt to get rattled occasionally. He gave Taylor very little rope, and was always ready for a dash forward on his own. Lennon played a great game at back, his kicking being clean and sure, and his judgment in tackling was remarkable. Tirrell was of a quieter, but equally useful mood, and the pair gave the visiting forwards very little scope for shooting. Bailey did his little bit well.

Durston kept goal very well indeed, but I think he does not like low shots. He seemed to be a long time getting down to them. Some of his clearances, however, were quite brilliant, and his judgment was seldom at fault. I liked Rosier the better at back, and Amos gave a good account of himself except that he was too often using illegal means of stopping opponents. Spreadbury was the most dangerous of the inside forwards, his dribbling and rushing tactics often carrying him far, but Taylor and Cartmell struck me as useful forwards had they received good support.