

At Luton on Christmas Day.

LUTON TOWN Nil
BRIGHTON & HOVE A. Nil

LUTON.—Orr; Anderson, Till; Walker, Jennings, Millar; Hoar, Green, Kerr, Butcher, Hoten.

BRIGHTON.—Hayes; Thompson, Jenkins; McAllister, Coomber, Little; Groves, Nell, Cook, Hopkins, Wilson.

Referee: Mr. A. L. Grinstead.

It was a thousand pities that this game was not won, for the crowd was the largest of the season, and if the Town had been able to produce their best form we might have kept a couple of thousand of the "extras." And I am afraid not half of the spectators were aware of the difficulties under which the teams were operating. The referee told me at half-time that the ground was in a terrible condition, for although it looked excellent from the rails, it was soft on top and very hard underneath. There were frozen lumps of turf that turned the ball unexpectedly, so that control was well nigh impossible.

The Town were the better side on the run of the play. They showed more science, and had the Brighton team engaged in their own half for long periods, but there was an absence of vitality in front of goal. Indeed, the game was dull and uninteresting for stretches at a time, and comparatively few shots were aimed at either goal. It was very unfortunate for the Town that

HOAR WAS CRIPPLED

at the end of ten minutes' play, and I thought Jenkins deserved censure. There was a race for the ball, and the Brighton player went straight at the Town winger without troubling about the ball. The clash resulted in both going down, and Jenkins retired to the dressing room, while Hoar was patched up on the line and returned, but he soon had to leave, when Jenkins returned. Soon after the interval, Hoar resumed, but he was of little use, and the Town attack suffered much more than the Brighton defence. There was a terrible bruise on Hoar's hip after the game, and he was very plucky to turn out in the second half.

Over half-an-hour had gone before Orr

was brought into action, and he brushed behind a swerving cross-shot that looked a likely scorer. On the other hand Hayes had been tested several times and had shown resource and agility, but for the most part he held a watching brief. Hoten was a troublesome factor when he managed to get a chance to shoot, but Green had the best chance. He was clear of the opposition but shot hurriedly, and the ball went a few inches wide. A long shot from Millar was just wide, too, and the Brighton backs called the whistle into action many times by clever use of the offside law.

Most of us were reconciled to a draw at the interval, for there seemed little likelihood of either defence being beaten. There was

AN EARLY THRILL

in the second half when Hoten recovered from a trip by Thompson and fired in a hard, low ball. Hayes flung himself upon it, and Kerr and Butcher seemed certain to score when the ball eluded the keeper's grasp, but he recovered, and held on while Butcher lay atop until the referee penalised the Town players.

There was little further of interest for the rest of the game, for the backs on each side were very safe, and big kicking was the order, while in the last quarter of an hour the Albion concentrated on keeping their goal intact, and the ball was often out of play. "Anywhere for safety," was the motto. Who would blame them? So the game was goal-less.

Neither goalkeeper had much to do. Orr framed better than at Reading, perhaps, because he began to feel at home, and got a good reception from the crowd. Anderson and Till were magnificent backs, and the only fault was a tendency to over-kick the forwards, but the ball was light and tricky. They gave the visiting forwards few chances of shooting, and recovered well. The halves were resolute and strong, and played a level sort of game. Jennings smothered Cook and Hopkins, the crack marksmen of the Albion, the former being the man to score four of the five goals against Bournemouth on Saturday. Walker found Wilson the best of the visiting line, but more than held his own, and put in some clever work, while Millar gave Groves little scope. The forwards mixed it, and there was not one of them that could be said to be much better than another. Hoten and Green were

THE MORE DANGEROUS.

perhaps. Kerr was given few chances, and Butcher was handicapped by a very bad toe, although he gave Hoten a few nice passes.

Of the visitors, Hayes did his bit well. The backs were powerful, and not too scrupulous, and much the same may be said of the middle men, against whom many free kicks were given. The forwards had pace and brio, but not much skill to commend them. Hopkins was the smartest of the inside men, but Wilson was probably the most dangerous of the quinquets. Cook spoiled himself by the frequency with which he fouled Jennings.

Mr. Grinstead was a conscientious referee, thorough and painstaking, but he consistently blundered in one respect—whistling for offside when players were not near the ball, and making no attempt to interfere with play in any way whatever. He was courageous enough to admit a mistake, however, for once when he had "blown up" the Town for offside he saw that he had erred, and he dropped the ball. That is a fine trait.