

At Brighton on Boxing Day.

BRIGHTON & HOVE A. 4 goals
LUTON TOWN Nil

BRIGHTON. — Hayes; Thompson, Smith; McAllister, Coomber, Little; Groves, Neil, Cook, Hopkins, Wilson.

LUTON. Orr; Anderson, Till; Walker, Foster, Millar; Prentice, Green, Kerr, Reid, Hoten.

Referee: Mr. A. L. Grinstead, London.

It was the thirteenth match since the Town were defeated, but I am not superstitious, and could the Town have fielded at the Goldstone-road ground, Hove, the team that played on Christmas Day at Luton, I would have given them as good enough to win there as well as elsewhere. But there was enough misfortune without the dark significance that is supposed to lurk in the number 13. Hoar was a certain absentee; that was known after the game at home; about eight o'clock on Wednesday morning it was known that Jennings could not play, owing to a badly bruised knee, and so Foster had to be hunted up, and was actually brought out of bed and came along without breakfast. The day before he had been too ill to play, having been in bed on Monday with an influenza cold. At St. Albans station George Butcher was hobbling about with an old boot on, the toe-cap having been cut off to allow space for a badly swollen toe. Fortunately Reid had been detailed to travel as reserve, but the team presented a strange appearance. At outside right was Horace Prentice, a lad who was playing with a Northamptonshire junior team on Saturday; was signed on Monday to play in the Southern League game at Brighton on Christmas morning, and when he returned that evening he was held up at Luton, his signature to League forms was secured, and he was instructed to travel in Hoar's place the following morning. With such

A CHAPTER OF MISFORTUNE

a victory could hardly be expected, but the Town did not deserve to be beaten by four goals clear.

Brighton were the better side, undoubtedly, and they played a winning game from start to finish, but the Town had gilt-edged chances of scoring—three very easy chances, and what luck was going went to the "Seasiders."

The ground was soft, and while there was no big advantage in winning the toss, Coomber had that fortune. Five minutes' play sufficed to show that the Albion were the quicker on the ball, and more virile than the Town, but their first goal should not have been allowed. It came at the end of five minutes. Walker went down and blocked the ball at Hopkins' feet, and the forward went over. A free kick was given, and from 25 yards' range LITTLE fired into goal. As Orr was about to flat away under the bar he was bowled into the net by Neil, who got the credit of the goal, thanks to the Pressmen. The Town went away, and showed some spirit. By sharp manœuvring on the left the ball was taken through and transferred to Green, who had a clear opening, and took deliberate aim, but instead of the ball flashing past Hayes into the net it trickled into the keeper's hands.

The Albion put up strong attacks after this, and shot well, Orr frequently having to fling himself at full length, but the ball usually travelled close to the upright. More good play by the Town, and Hoten ran inside to receive from the right and fire in a hot shot which Hayes smartly saved under the bar. The exchanges were fast, with Brighton always the more dangerous, but they were made to shoot from long range. Then came

"AN AWFUL BLUNDER,"

to use the words of the Brighton Pressmen. The referee was in the centre of the field as COOK received, when quite six yards offside, and in spite of the loud appeals he was allowed to go on and give Orr no chance to save. But the Town played up well, and only the impotence of the forwards was responsible for Brighton keeping a clean sheet. Good work by Prentice gave Kerr a gilt-edged chance not three yards from goal, but he failed. Brighton did not lose any time in profiting by this escape, and their forwards gave Orr an anxious time. Just on the interval, HOPKINS, who was totally unmarked, received a forward pass, and the Appeals for offside again being ignored, he promptly netted.

So we were three down at the interval.

Reid and Hoten changed places on the resumption, and there was "a certain liveliness" in the vicinity of the home goal. In spite of a trip Hoten got through and only just missed. Then Kerr broke through on his own, but the ball travelled too fast for him, and he lost control when close to the post. Brighton again forced the play, but Orr had not an immense amount of work to do, although the ball was constantly hovering round his goal. The Town had several turns, and once Walker and his wing worked through, and the half-back was only inches out with a hard drive that topped the bar. Kerr missed when close in through having to shoot hurriedly, the ball going yards too high, and Millar put in the best shot of the

afternoon after a smart dribble, Hayes saving finely. The best goal of the match followed. COOK snapped up a pass a little way inside the Town half, and, running through strongly, he gave Orr no chance. The Town were not done with, for Green dribbled through in brilliant fashion, only to shoot very badly when clear. In the closing stages Brighton had matters very much their own way, but could not score again.

Had Brighton won by two goals clear we could not have grumbled at any except our own, but the first and second goals should never have been allowed, and Mr. Grinstead was sadly at fault.

The weakness of the Town team was pretty general. The forwards were especially poor, for Green and Hoten were about the only men capable of shooting, and the former could not get any powder behind the ball. The line gave the poorest display of the season. Prentice is fast and showed promise, but he needs training and coaching, and it was asking a lot of a junior to play in two such games on consecutive days. Hoten did enough in the second half to show that his place is inside.

The halves were incapable of holding the virile Albion forwards. Foster was obviously unfit, and the wonder was that he stood the gruelling pace. In the first half the Albion wingers had too much latitude, and Wilson had many clear runs and centres. - There was an improvement in the second half, but the damage had been done. A heavy load fell upon the backs and, vainly as they strove, it was too much for them. They showed one feature that was new to their game, and did good work. They copied the Brighton backs' offside tactics splendidly, and if the Town halves had been always alive to the moves, the home forwards would have found progress very difficult. The backs were the best part of the team, but they were over-worked. Orr kept goal well, saving several good shots, and the early impressions of his ability will be strengthened rapidly.

Brighton played well all round. Thompson was the better back, all the halves were strong, and the forwards played together splendidly.

There were about 10,000 spectators.