

GILLINGHAM'S VISIT.

ON Monday evening Gillingham put up a splendid challenge on the Town ground, and, though defeated, they were by no means disgraced. Their team is far better than last season, and the numerous new players will carry the colours high this season, or I am very much mistaken. Youth and strength, with no small degree of skill in the forward positions, are factors that will tell in their favour with longer association.

The Town considerably improved the better of the first-half play, but the stout opposition of the Gillingham halves and backs was successful for half-an-hour. Many fine movements came to nothing simply because the Town wingers, Bedford in particular, could not get the ball squarely across when they had overcome the defenders, and time after time Smith had only to stand still, and the ball fell into his arms, while the Town inside men were waiting in striking position without the wherewithal to strike.

Gillingham were a "pushing" lot in more than one sense, and the whistle was frequently heard, but the methods served to keep the Town at bay. Woods narrowly missed with a header, and Yardley made the crowd gasp by his failure to steer the ball past Smith when only two or three yards out. Harford had nothing very exacting, and Smith's duties were

chiefly that he should keep his eyes open and his arms open.

First blood was drawn in just over half-an-hour, when Daly, who had taken part in some of the best movements, got the ball across, and it beat Wilson on the bounce. Before the back could recover RENNIE had rushed in, and Smith was hopelessly beaten by a terrific shot. The spectators had hardly regained their breath from the cheering when Fraser initiated a movement by darting into the middle and then turning the ball over to Woods; he lifted it along, and Rennie, jumping high, nodded it backwards for YARDLEY to slip in and, after a short and sharp tussle with Bartley, shoot into the net.

The second half opened well, but play deteriorated a great deal. The Town forwards were very disappointing, and matters were made worse when Daly was hurt, and was a passenger for the last half-hour. The Town put in a lot of good work in the early minutes of this half, and Smith had to bestir himself many times. As the game wore on, however, Kingham and Richards were sorely taxed, and now and then Harford had his hands full to spilling point.

There were periods when Gillingham threatened to overrun the Town defence, because the halves seemed to falter, but the Town backs were in fine fettle, and frustrated attack after attack in splendid style. Smith had the stiffer shots to deal with, but Harford had his share, and quite as much as he wanted, and when the end came both teams had become tired, and were ready for a rest. The Town deserved to win because they were the better side in the first half and took two of their chances then, but Gillingham won many friends by their gallant efforts to save the game.