

Crusader Comments ON A COMIC MATCH.

COMEDY from the spectator's point of view, though the players would not agree that there was much fun in it. For THAMES it was something of a tragedy from the attendance standpoint, as the club are fighting hard to make a name, and really deserve better support. LUTON TOWN team did not seem capable of exerting themselves to such an extent as to win, though I am fairly sure Thames will be soundly beaten at Luton if they have not a better side.

Still, we must wait and see, and I am sure that every one of the party from Luton would wish Thames well, for they were cordial in their welcome. Players of each side were well acquainted, and chatted happily together before and after the game, and the officials did all that was possible to make the Luton party comfortable. It was a difficult matter, for a more cheerless day could hardly be imagined. Curiously enough, though right on the riverside, in three years there has been only one football match postponed owing to fog. Mr. Milbank, the genial secretary, told me this, and added that only twice have the greyhound racing meets had to be postponed.

West Ham Stadium will be a very big noise in the football world within a year or two, if I mistake not. They have almost all that could be desired except a winning team, and they could hardly be expected to do better than their present record in view of the short time in which they had to make preparations after they had been elected to the League. The ground is capable of accommodating a crowd of 120,000 people; one stand runs the complete length of the ground, and on the opposite side is another bigger than the Town club's stand.

The general equipment, dressing rooms, offices, indeed everything, is splendid, and I liked the place far better than Highbury for the comfort and warm hospitality. I am quite confident that if Thames do not rise from the rut this season, they will remain in the League, and when they begin to win matches they will find a crowd all right—and an enthusiastic crowd, too. Mr. Milbank told me that the people undoubtedly stayed away on Saturday owing to the fog, fearing that there could not be a match. "It is remarkable," he said, "that they cannot be weaned from the idea that as we are so close to the river there must be fog here on days like this."

It is true that the match was not much of a spectacle, but that was largely because we were so far away from the play. Between the grand stand and the playing pitch there are the enclosure, a spacious greyhound racing track, a dirt track, and a stretch of turf. From the pitch the stand was a blaze of light, but when the arc lamps around the racing track were suddenly lit during the second half there was a loud cry from the spectators for them to be turned off, for they simply blotted out the pitch to the eye of the spectator.

Mr. Rous had no doubt about beginning or continuing the game, but before the match he had some doubt about a finish, and at half-time the players never left the pitch. Now and then there was a slight lift of the mist, and for a brief space it was possible to recognise the players, but there were periods, and especially when the Town were on the move, when the ball could not be seen at all, and only by the actions of the players could we tell the direction in which it was moving. Once there was some speculation as to where it could be, and we said it was in the centre of the field, but actually Banes was placing it for a goal kick. We knew that when a spectre dashed from one side of the goal, and we heard a thump, and then the ball rose just above the sky-line, as marked by the dark blotch of the stand on the opposite side of the ground.

In these circumstances it is useless to deal with the play at all, and would be unfair to criticise the players, but it seemed to us as if the Town missed a very easy chance in the first half, either Dent or Rennie being almost

under the bar following a dash by M'Nestry, and the only goal of the match came some twenty minutes after the change of ends when Phillips lashed in a shot that appeared to be going out of play, but we were told that it hit the upright and glanced in. We could see the shadow of Banes as he threw himself across goal at the ball, and then we heard the people on the opposite side shout, and saw the Thames players embracing Phillips. We did not know it was actually he who had scored until we followed him to his position for the re-start, as he shot from an inside right position.

Thames have a few good players. I liked the way their wingers went into the game, and Phillips, the old Millwall player, had a roving commission that proved successful. The ball was in the air a good deal, and both goalkeepers saw plenty of it, but there were few really good shots. Once in the second half there was a heap of players on the ground almost under the bar of the Thames goal, and from the struggle it seemed that the goal must fall, but Dobbin managed to get the ball away.

From the listless manner in which the Town played I thought they were feeling the effects of the Cup-tie. They did not infuse much energy into the game, and though one guessed that there were a few nice movements, there was an absence of real shooting ability. Thames did the more pressing, if it could be so named, but they seldom looked like breaking down the defence of Kingham and Smith. Further comment I avoid, for it would not be fair to the players.

THAMES.—Dobbin; Donnelly, Smith; Warner, McCulloch, Riddoch; F. Le May, L. McCarthy, Lindsay, Phillips, Durpion.

LUTON.—Banes; Kingham, Smith; Hale, McGinnigle, Muir; M'Nestry, Armstrong, Rennie, Dent, Bryce.

Referee.—Mr. S. F. Rous, Hemel Hempstead.