

THE FARE FOR FULHAM.

LUTON'S FOUR PILLS FOR BEECHAM

By *Crusader.*

FULHAM must have felt that they had indeed run up against promotion candidates on Saturday, in spite of LUTON TOWN'S moderate position on the League table. The London side played right up to the high standard of last season, when they beat the Town at Luton quite comfortably. That was in the League game, for in the Cup re-play they suffered defeat, and on Saturday the score was the same, and quite as decisive, if not more so. The visitors went all out from the beginning, and it took the Town team some time before they could be said to be making as good a fight. Once they got a grip, however, they showed Fulham that they could last the pace and pull out a little bit extra. That factor turned the scale.

There would be no ground for complaint about the attendances at any time if the football was always as good as was witnessed in this match. It was fast and thrilling, especially in the first half, when the defences of either side were kept at full stretch, and often puzzled by the speed and the swing with which the forward lines operated. Fulham began it, and were clever enough to get the Town halves and backs in tangles. When the gauntlet was picked up, the Fulham defence knew all about it, and so play was carried from end to end at a cracking pace, with the visitors rather the more dangerous.

Fulham's halves and forwards showed splendid footwork, and the way in which the inside forwards changed the point of attack justified the alarm of the Town supporters, and the boisterous enthusiasm of the Londoners in the crowd, who carried a chequered flag of black and white. But skill was met courageously, and with splendid determination, and the response of the Town defenders have inspired the forwards, for they, in turn, took up the challenge, and received their reward in the second half, when the visitors wavered, and finally fell right away from their high estate.

The sides were well matched in the opening period, and as Fulham had taken the initiative at the start, the Town concluded the first period in dashing style, and for every narrow escape of the Town goal there was its counterpart at the other end. Indeed, Beecham's work was rather more exacting than Harford's taking his forty-five minutes as a whole, and he and his colleagues were relieved when the whistle signalled the rest. Each goalkeeper had been beaten once, and each had seen his charge survive by the merest shave. Fulham's inside left, Price, had hit the Luton bar before a goal was scored, and when Luton were on top, just before the whistle for breathing space, Beecham saw the ball leave his outstretched hands and hit the upright. On each occasion a helmpate got rid of the danger.

The first goal was counted to the Town, and came as the result of good work on the right wing. Daly centred, and Rennie allowed the ball to go on to DRINNAN, who shot for goal as Beecham came out, and the ball passed over the custodian's head and found the net. Fulham's goal was more spectacular, but equally well deserved, though I thought there was a momentary lapse on the part of Town defenders in permitting ALLEN to travel into position without challenge. As they fell back he went on, and wound up with a brilliant drive against which Harford had no chance, so the teams crossed over with a goal to each.

LUTON 1
FULHAM 1

Few who had not followed the fluctuations of the game closely would have given much for the Town's chance in the second half.

Really it was a question as to which would yield. Happily for us, the Town renewed the struggle with even greater determination, whereas the visitors were feeling the effects of their first-half endeavours. They rallied to the Town's formidable re-start, but there was not the same thrust and energy in their work, and within a few minutes they were fighting a losing battle. Gallantly enough they strove to respond, but the wilt was clear, and the Town merited the lead when YARDLEY capped a clever bit of play by Daly, and beat Beecham with a ground shot.

The firm hold of the Town defenders had not to be relaxed, nor was it. The team rose to give a fine display subsequently, so that when RENNIE cleverly diverted a hard-driven ball from Clark into the net, soon after the game was three parts old, the result was fairly safe. It was not the end of the story, however, for the Town attacked vigorously, and beyond occasional raids by the visiting wingers, the home defence was not so hard-worked. Drinnan justly got the fourth goal, as his play throughout this game had been full of sparkle, and had given a lot of anxiety. The ball was taken down by the home right, and was transferred from man to man; a scramble in the penalty area followed, and then the ball was slipped to McInnes, who centred from the line. Beecham managed to knock the ball into the air, and while he was on the ground DRINNAN headed it into the net.

For the home side Kingham and Richards, apart from one or two rare instances, tackled and kicked with splendid resolution and power. The latter almost subdued Temple, who was the forward most feared. In this task the Town back had the magnificent co-operation of Fraser, who played a great game in all phases of half-back business. Tireless and fearless, he was skilful, too, and he revelled in his big job. Fulton also played one of his best games, and at right half and centre-half (he changed places with Clark at half-time) did brilliant work. Clark was not so prominent, though showing to advantage in the second period, and helping his wing along cleverly.

The forwards, with support at its best, were more and more dangerous as the game continued. Daly showed decided improvement, and Yardley was better than in recent games, his passing being better, and his control immensely improved. Rennie had fewer shots than usual, perhaps because the game was not so open, or, again, perhaps because Binks played the policeman. Yet Rennie put in some fine shots, and his passing was neat as ever. Drinnan, however, was the master mind forward, and appears to be back to his best form. He dribbled and passed with great skill, and would have done more damage had McInnes been as good in the first half as in the second. The winger was not happy until after the change of ends, but then did well enough to justify his inclusion.

Fulham's best were Beecham, Rosier, Binks, and Hammond, and the last-named is a grand young player. Recruited from London amateurs, he has height, weight, and courage, allied to clever control, and the Town could do with a few as good.

There were nearly 10,000 spectators.

LUTON TOWN 4
FULHAM 1
LUTON.—Harford; Kingham, Richards; Fulton, Clark, Fraser; Daly, Yardley, Rennie, Drinnan, McInnes.

FULHAM.—Beecham; Rosier, Gibbon; Oliver, Binks, Barrett; Temple, Hammond, Allen, Price, Penn.

Referee:—Mr. G. Franklin, Portsmouth.