

THE COST OF LIVING.

To the Editor.

Sir—One of your correspondents mentions tea 6d., sugar 10d., self-raising flour 4d., soap 2d. I wonder does that do the household washing, scrubbing, &c.? Not much of it left Saturday night! Meat 3/, potatoes 6d., cabbages 6d., fruit 6d., two cakes 1/ (extravagance!); salts, liquorice, 4d. Why these expensive drugs? They are good, I admit; but where does the chemist or doctor come in? Are they not necessary? Your correspondent says tobacco nil, gambling nil, beer nil. I don't think any housewife includes those articles in her week's expenses. Clothes 3/, bread 3/, boots 2/. Your correspondent does not appear to use such things as carrots or turnips, peas, beans, lettuce, &c. In the fruit line he is very extravagant in spending 6d. Why, a pound of tomatoes I have never bought for less than 6d. this season. Then there are cherries, peaches, and apricots, and, if your correspondent doesn't touch these, currants, raisins, oatmeal, tapioca; in fact, a dozen other necessary lines. Your correspondent does not use a broom, it seems, or a scrub; that would account for the small allowance for soap. I have been wondering whether all householders could live as cheaply as your correspondent, at a cost of 6/4 each for four people for food and clothing and boots per week. It costs me for four more in family more for our Sunday dinner meat than it costs him for the whole week. Also, we have 1½ lb. tomatoes for tea occasionally, 9d., and every other line accordingly.—I am, &c.,

ONE WHO BELIEVES IN HAVING ENOUGH.

Sir—When I read a letter you published in "The Advertiser" of December 24, I said "How jolly glad I am that I am not an infant again, and in that household!" What a bread and butter, jam, no-milk existence would be mine! What a modest chop each day would be mine, and how could I endure life with only a farthing's worth of fruit, potatoes, and vegetables each day doled out to me! True, there would be no stint of pepper and vinegar to help wash it down, nor sulphur, liquorice, Epsom salts, and tartar to work it out. But I forget, I should have to fight shy of cabbages, because how could the kitchenmaid possibly wash the insects out of the cabbages when there was only a pennyworth of salt allowed between her and the cook? Twopenny-

worth of soap a week might wash the clothes pretty clean, especially as there would not be much blacking to splutter over pinnies (if there is only a pennyworth to go all over four pairs of boots each week). Anyway there would be plenty of blue for the laundress; and I suppose two shilling's worth of fuel would provide firing enough to iron out a pennyworth of starch. No doubt some might think it is bad taste to find fault with these items, especially if they knew that this was the diet to which your obedient servant was subjected when an infant; but then they might not be aware that I have been working diligently for years to get the indigestion germs out of my "little Mary" (the germs having thriven better than I did on this curious diet), and I have hopes (on the word of good medical men) that if I go on trying a few years more the beggars may get starved out. Of course, I must not die in the meanwhile, or these particular germs might take a mean revenge on humanity, and skip into another fellow's tummy that is being fed like I was. Who knows? I won't say 25/4 ought not to feed and clothe a family, only let the poor beggars have some more milk and green feed.—I am &c.,

L. E. HAWKINS.

Longwood, December 26, 1908.

[We are informed by Mr. F. H. Bull, of Maylands, that he is not the author of the letter on "Cost of Living" signed "F. H. Bull," Maylands, which appeared in "The Advertiser" of December 24, nor does he sympathise in the least degree with the statements it contains. We regret the annoyance occasioned Mr. Bull by the publication of a letter, whose signature we accepted as bona fide.—Ed.]