

for a very few of the most valuable selections, they deserve great credit. And when it has been thoroughly done for a rich and beautiful passage or selection, how much better would it be for the class to be exercised upon it, until each individual were able to read it naturally, with feeling and with power, then to leave it, after one or two readings, and hasten on to new lessons, which the teacher has no time to make the class understand and feel, and which can only by accident be read well.

I say nothing of the effect, upon the mind, of reading without understanding, and, therefore, without inquiry or thought; of the risk of getting false impressions, instead of correct opinions and an exact knowledge of facts; or of the danger of forming the pernicious habit of superficial and desultory reading. I can only intimate some of the considerations which belong to this important subject. But have I not said enough to make it probable that the power of reading well may be better attained from often reading a few passages perfectly understood and felt, than from volumes hurried over and very imperfectly learned?

Let whoever wishes to form opinions for himself upon this matter, visit, without previous notice, any of the schools nearest him, and listen to the reading. He will have to conclude, I fear, that, in at least two cases out of three, the children are allowed to read with so little true comprehension and feeling of the passages read, that any amount of such reading can do very little towards enlarging and maturing the mind, and thus making good, thoughtful readers; and that at least one-half of the time now spent in reading would be better employed in something else.

C. B. E.

EXTRACTS AND REPLIES.

MOWING MACHINES.

Will you or some one of your numerous subscribers have the kindness to inform me, through the *Farmer*, if you know of a better mowing machine than the Buckeye, made at Worcester? A SUBSCRIBER.
Charlton, Jan., 1864.

ECONOMY OF STEAMING FODDER.

I write to gain information through the columns of your paper, in regard to steaming fodder for a herd of cattle. We all very well know that hay, straw or corn-fodder run through a hay cutter, wet, and then sprinkled over with meal, improves it very much. But we do not all know how much better steamed fodder is for our herds than dry. I am interested to know how much per cent. is added to the value of hay or fodder by steaming it and feeding it without meal. Perhaps some of the readers of the *Farmer* steam the fodder for their stock of cattle this winter, and can give the desired information; also, the expense of putting in steam works capable of steaming 1000 pounds at a time, and the cost per day, of running the same. If steam works can be used at an advantage by farmers here in New England, I hope some one who has tried the operation will enlighten the rest of us, who are now in the dark, as to whether it is profitable to steam the fodder for a stock of cattle or not. M. W.
North Leominster, Jan. 5, 1864.

REMARKS.—Boiling or steaming food for hogs is generally practiced by the best farmers throughout the country; but to a limited extent only, either in this country or England, do they cook the fodder for cattle, horses and sheep. In the agricultural books and journals of Europe, and in the articles of writers in our own country who take their ideas from them, we have accounts of extensive operations for steaming

or boiling the hay, and straw, and roots, and grain which make up the food of the farm stock. In "Stephens' Book of the Farm" we find cuts and descriptions of two sets of "steamers," one costing \$47 to \$63, and the other from \$50 to \$100. But a Mr. Horsfall, of England, whose statement of his own success in steaming food for milch cows, has been extensively copied by editors of books and papers in this country, may, in the language of the day, be denominated, "the father of steaming." In the *Monthly Farmer* of January, 1857, (Vol. IX., p. 12.) we gave a brief synopsis of his system. It is published at length in Flint's "Treatise on Milch Cows and Dairy Farming." To these we would refer our correspondent. We may, however, remark that one of the leading objects with Mr. Horsfall, in steaming food, is to make his stock eat straw, rape-cake, &c., which they will not do when offered alone. It is a deserved compliment to the grain for which our country is distinguished, that Mr. Horsfall considers Indian meal the most fattening food he can get. Nearly thirty years ago we called, one cold winter's evening, at the log cabin of a Michigan pioneer, and while warming ourselves at the blazing fire of logs piled against one side of the room, of course, a wall of rough stones, we noticed that something was covered by the hot embers, and were told that they found it economical to bake bread for their hard-working oxen, which they were then doing in loaves of corn meal about as large as a "half bushel." In conclusion we will say that we do not suppose that a large per cent. is added by steaming, to the value of fodder; although its nutritive substance may be made more available by cooking. But whether enough more so to pay, is the question not yet decided in the affirmative by the practice of our best farmers.

SAVE YOUR COAL ASHES.

It has been my custom to get all the coal ashes that I could and put it around my trees. In the first place, it keeps the mice from eating the bark, or girdling them, in the winter, when snow is on the ground; in the next place, it saves me the trouble of digging around my trees; and in the third place, it keeps the ground free from weeds and grass, and loose. I have used coal ashes several years and by putting a wheelbarrow load to a tree, my trees thus treated do better than others do by digging around and manuring them. It keeps off vermin, borers and other injurious insects.
Spring Grove, Jan., 1864. S. A. SHURTLEFF.

REMARKS.—A friend of ours who has had much experience in the cultivation of grapes, puts a high value on coal ashes, as an ingredient in his compost for the soil in which his grapes are planted.

BUMP'S PATENT ATMOSPHERIC CHURN.

Since publishing the expose, by "Viator," of this humbug, we have received several communications from victims of the swindle, which agree so fully with his statements, as to make their publication unnecessary. Not only the manner of its introduction, but the churn itself is represented as a fraud and an imposition.

A MONSTER HOG.—John W. Copenan, of Cayuga county, State of New York, has a cross-bred hog, stated to have weighed in May last 1120 pounds, in September 1249 pounds, in October 1276 pounds, and in December he weighed 1340 pounds, and has been growing rapidly since, and will probably now weigh 1400 pounds. His breed is said to be Leicester and Suffolk with a slight cross of Berkshire.