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THE IMPROVEMENT OF NATIVE CATTLE.

We have long regarded the common methods of attempting to improve the native cattle of this country as short-sighted and extremely defective. The process consists mainly in the importation of foreign breeds, reared in different climates, and under peculiar circumstances, which have no parallel in the United States. Compared with the stock that has been thoroughly acclimated in North America, and constitutionally adapted to the herbage of the continent, all recent importations labor under many disadvantages; and unless they receive extra keep and care, they are uniformly less thrifty and poorer than native cattle. To improve the latter in the most economical way, requires skillful breeding from the best American blood, rather than the large infusion of foreign blood, which is illy adapted to the scant vegetation and poor pasturage of this comparatively wild country. It has been so fashionable to propagate Short-horns, Devons, Herefords, and other English breeds, that no one has attempted to get up similar American breeds from the best native stock which has been one or two centuries from Europe. Were the true principles of meliorating the organic

structure and functions of domesticated quadrupeds generally understood, we feel confident that genuine American blood would be regarded as in no respect inferior to that of any other nation for all useful purposes. It has never been proved that American cows and oxen are less productive in milk, beef, or labor than those of any other country. They may be, perhaps, a little less beautiful, or come somewhat later to maturity; but these defects, where they exist, may be removed without importing at an enormous expense, the pampered animals of English breeders, or those of any other foreign land. When we duly consider the fact that there are about twenty million head of neat cattle in the United States which need improvement, it appears Eutopian to suppose that anything beside correct rules in *home breeding* will suffice to change for the better the general character of the live stock of thirty-one States and six territories. To bring animals to early maturity, whether calves, lambs, or pigs, they must be pushed from their birth till they are deemed ripe for the butcher. On this principle, Short-horns have acquired the habit of attaining the size and weight of four and five year old steers, when they are only two years old. The calves of native stock, after a few generations of generous feeding, would indicate the same tendency in an equal degree. The truth of these remarks is illustrated by taking a pair of pigs from an inferior race, and developing therefrom a breed distinguished equally for its beauty and disposition to fatten at an early age. The best breed in the world if badly treated for several generations, will show many *bad points*, and become utterly worthless for propagation. What are denominated "points," are made and lost with much greater facility than many suppose. There is no inconsiderable humbug in the craft of the professional herdsman, stock-breeder and speculator. Like the horse-jockey, he gets up his