

prevail over the others, if the herds were left undisturbed for the next several centuries.

The rabbit is another animal which has been introduced, and has succeeded very well; so that they abound over large parts of the island. Yet, like the horses, they are confined within certain limits; for they have not crossed the central chain of hills, nor would they have extended even so far as its base, if, as the Gauchos informed me, small colonies had not been carried there. I should not have supposed that these animals, natives of northern Africa, could have existed in a climate so humid as this, and which enjoys so little sunshine that even wheat ripens only occasionally. It is asserted that in Sweden, which any one would have thought a more favorable climate, the rabbit cannot live out of doors. The first few pair, moreover, had here to contend against pre-existing enemies, in the fox and some large hawks. The French naturalists have considered the black variety a distinct species, and called it *Lepus Magellanicus*.<sup>1</sup> They imagined that Magellan, when talking of an animal under the name of "conejos" in the Strait of Magellan, referred to this species; but he was alluding to a small cavy, which to this day is thus called by the Spaniards. The Gauchos laughed at the idea of the black kind being different from the gray, and they said that at all events it had not extended its range any further than the gray kind; that the two were never found separate; and that they readily bred together, and produced piebald offspring. Of the latter I now possess a specimen, and it is marked about the head differently from the French specific description. This circumstance shows how cautious naturalists should be in making species; for even Cuvier, on

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<sup>1</sup> Lesson's *Zoology of the Voyage of the "Coquille,"* tom. i. p. 168. All the early voyagers, and especially Bougainville, distinctly state that the wolf-like fox was the only native animal on the island. The distinction of the rabbit as a species is taken from peculiarities in the fur, from the shape of the head, and from the shortness of the ears. I may here observe that the difference between the Irish and English hare rests upon nearly similar characters, only more strongly marked.