

believed to be quite fertile together, and a perfect gradation can be shown to exist from the largest domestic kinds, having enormously developed ears, to the common wild kind. The parent-form must have been a burrowing animal, a habit not common, as far as I can discover, to any other species in the large genus *Lepus*. Only one wild species is known with certainty to exist in Europe; but the rabbit (if it be a true rabbit) from Mount Sinai, and likewise that from Algeria, present slight differences; and these forms have been considered by some authors as specifically distinct.<sup>6</sup> But such slight differences would aid us little in explaining the more considerable differences characteristic of the several domestic races. If the latter are the descendants of two or more closely allied species, these, with the exception of the common rabbit, have been exterminated in a wild state; and this is very improbable, seeing with what pertinacity this animal holds its ground. From these several reasons we may infer with safety that all the domestic breeds are the descendants of the common wild species. But from what we hear of the marvellous success in France in rearing hybrids between the hare and rabbit,<sup>7</sup> it is possible, though not probable, from the great difficulty in making the first cross, that some of the larger races, which are coloured like the hare, may have been modified by crosses with this animal. Nevertheless, the chief differences in the skeletons of the several domestic breeds cannot, as we shall presently see, have been derived from a cross with the hare.

There are many breeds which transmit their characters more or less truly. Every one has seen the enormous lop-eared rabbits exhibited at our shows; various allied sub-breeds are reared on the Continent, such as the so-called Andalusian, which is said to have a large head with a round forehead, and to attain a greater size than any other kind; another large Paris breed is named the Rouennais, and has a

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accounts of perfect success in taming and breeding from the wild rabbit. See also Dr. P. Broca, in '*Journal de la Physiologie*,' tom. ii. p. 368.

<sup>6</sup> Gervais, '*Hist. Nat. des Mammi-*

*fères*,' tom. i. p. 292.

<sup>7</sup> See Dr. P. Broca's interesting memoir on this subject in Brown-Séquard's '*Journ. de Phys.*,' vol. ii. p. 367.