

me three more specimens in brine, and two alive. These seven specimens, though caught at different periods, closely resembled each other. They were full grown, as shown by the state of their bones. Although the conditions of life in Porto Santo are evidently highly favourable to rabbits, as proved by their extraordinarily rapid increase, yet they differ conspicuously in their small size from the wild English rabbit. Four English rabbits, measured from the incisors to the anus, varied between 17 and 17½ inches in length; whilst two of the Porto Santo rabbits were only 14½ and 15 inches in length. But the decrease in size is best shown by weight; four wild English rabbits averaged 3 lb. 5 oz., whilst one of the Porto Santo rabbits, which had lived for four years in the Zoological Gardens, but had become thin, weighed only 1 lb. 9 oz. A fairer test is afforded by the comparison of the well-cleaned limb-bones of a Porto Santo rabbit killed on the island with the same bones of a wild English rabbit of average size, and they differed in the proportion of rather less than five to nine. So that the Porto Santo rabbits have decreased nearly three inches in length, and almost half in weight of body.²⁴ The head has not decreased in length proportionally with the body; and the capacity of the brain case is, as we shall hereafter see, singularly variable. I prepared four skulls, and these resembled each other more closely than do generally the skulls of wild English rabbits; but the only difference in structure which they presented was that the supra-orbital processes of the frontal bones were narrower.

In colour the Porto Santo rabbit differs considerably from the common rabbit; the upper surface is redder, and is rarely interspersed with any black or black-tipped hairs. The throat and certain parts of the under surface, instead of being pure white, are generally pale grey or leaden colour. But the most remarkable difference is in the ears and tail; I have examined many fresh English rabbits, and the large collection

²⁴ Something of the same kind has occurred on the island of Lipari, where, according to Spallanzani ('Voyage dans les deux Siciles,' quoted by Godron, 'De l'Espèce,' p. 364), a

countryman turned out some rabbits which multiplied prodigiously, but, says Spallanzani, "les lapins de l'île de Lipari sont plus petits que ceux qu'on élève en domesticité."