

decreased ; and thirdly, that the capacity of the skull in these same large lop-eared rabbits is very inferior to that of the hare, an animal of nearly the same size,—I conclude, notwithstanding the remarkable differences in capacity in the skulls of the small Porto Santo rabbits, and likewise in the large lop-eared kinds, that in all long-domesticated rabbits the brain has either by no means increased in due proportion with the increased length of the head and increased size of the body, or that it has actually decreased in size, relatively to what would have occurred had these animals lived in a state of nature. When we remember that rabbits, from having been domesticated and closely confined during many generations, cannot have exerted their intellect, instincts, senses, and voluntary movements, either in escaping from various dangers or in searching for food, we may conclude that their brains will have been feebly exercised, and consequently have suffered in development. We thus see that the most important and complicated organ in the whole organisation is subject to the law of decrease in size from disuse.

Finally, let us sum up the more important modifications which domestic rabbits have undergone, together with their causes as far as we can obscurely see them. By the supply of abundant and nutritious food, together with little exercise, and by the continued selection of the heaviest individuals, the weight of the larger breeds has been more than doubled. The bones of the limbs taken together have increased in weight, in due proportion with the increased weight of body, but the hind legs have increased less than the front legs ; but in length they have not increased in due proportion, and this may have been caused by the want of proper exercise. With the increased size of the body the third cervical has assumed characters proper to the fourth cervical vertebra ; and the eighth and ninth dorsal vertebræ have similarly assumed characters proper to the tenth and posterior vertebræ. The skull in the larger breeds has increased in length, but not in due proportion with the increased length of body ; the brain has not duly increased in dimensions, or has even actually decreased, and consequently the bony case for the brain has remained narrow, and by correlation has affected the bones of the face