

CHAPTER XIV.

REFRIGERATED PRODUCE.

THE transport of perishable foodstuffs in a refrigerated condition is a modern enterprise, dating back probably no further than the year 1874, when the first consignment of chilled beef was received into this country from the United States. It was preserved on the ice and salt system, which, until the introduction of mechanical refrigeration was the only means available. Subsequently, in 1879, a cargo of mutton arrived from New Zealand refrigerated by a mechanical cold-air process. From these tentative beginnings, the industry has developed to an enormous extent, and the trade in refrigerated meat is one of the most important means of supplying this country with food.

It does not come within the purview of this work to discuss the refrigerating arrangements on board ship or in the cold store ashore. It is only appropriate to consider the methods of handling the produce in transit between the two storage depôts. Obviously, expedition is in the highest degree essential, and absence of exposure to high temperature, as well as absolute cleanliness, is no less important.

FROZEN MEAT.

Weight and Size.—Carcases of lambs in the refrigerated condition weigh about 36 lb. each, or 62 carcasses to the ton; sheep, about 56 lb. each, or 40 carcasses to the ton.

Fore and hind quarters of beef weigh about 2 cwts. apiece.

A sheep's carcass will occupy from $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 3 cubic feet; a quarter of beef about $8\frac{1}{2}$ to 9 cubic feet.

Meat brought by ship to the quayside is handled out of the refrigerators in the holds in the usual manner. It is