

MONTHLY WEATHER REPORT.

MAY 1887.

SECTION I.

GENERAL SUMMARY FOR THE MONTH.

THE weather of May was generally cold, changeable, and unsettled over England, but somewhat finer and drier in Ireland and Scotland. Pressure was in excess of the average in all but the south-eastern parts of the kingdom; temperature was below the normal over Ireland and England, but above it in Scotland, the excess being greatest over the central districts; the wind was chiefly light or moderate from the Northward, but on the 20th blew a strong gale from the Westward on our western and southern coasts; rainfall was in most cases less than the average; the amount of bright sunshine was small in the eastern and southern parts of the kingdom, but larger in the west. Thunderstorms occurred in many places, but were neither frequent nor severe.

April 30—May 1.—At the close of April an anticyclone of very little intensity spread over our Islands from the westward, and on the morning of the 1st of May the central portion of the system lay directly over Ireland, England, and the Netherlands. Light or moderate breezes from the South-westward and Westward prevailed in the north, but North-easterly or Easterly winds in the south. The weather, although fair generally, was decidedly cool for the time of year, the daily maxima on the 1st being very little above 50° in any districts excepting central England and the south-east of Scotland, where the thermometer slightly exceeded 55° . During the evening and night of the 1st the anticyclone quickly disappeared, the change being produced mainly by the advance of a depression from the southward.

May 2-6.—The distribution of pressure now became of a complex cyclonic type. Shallow disturbances advanced towards our Islands from the southward and south-westward. The first (No. XVII.*) appeared over the north of Spain on the evening of the 1st, and subsequently travelled northwards to central England, where it apparently dispersed on the 3rd. During its progress thundery weather was experienced in many parts of England and France, and cold North-easterly winds blew in all our more southern districts, the daily maxima on the 2nd being below 50° in the south and east of England. The second depression also appeared over the north of Spain on the morning of the 5th, and afterwards travelled north-eastwards across the Bay of Biscay, France, and Belgium, to North Germany, where it broke up on the 7th. Owing to the presence of another low-pressure system to the westward of our Islands the North-easterly winds in the south were less decided than in the case of the former disturbance, but the weather again became dull, cold, and rainy. At Yarmouth 1.1 inches of rain fell on the 6th.

May 7-8.—In the rear of the last-mentioned depression the barometer rose briskly, and an anticyclone extended from Spain and France over the southern parts of the United Kingdom. Light Westerly winds consequently set in over the British Isles generally, with fair weather and a decided rise of temperature; on the 8th the thermometer in many parts of England rose above 70° .

* See Section II. and Map 2 Plate X., for the history and tracks of depressions.

May 9-16.—Between these dates the distribution of pressure was mainly anticyclonic. The central portion of the system was at first situated to the south-westward of our Islands, and the prevailing winds were therefore North-westerly or Westerly. After the 11th, however, the highest pressure moved slightly to the northward, and the winds on our southern coasts veered to the Eastward or North-eastward. The weather was generally fair, excepting on the 11th and 12th, when the anticyclonic conditions were temporarily interrupted by some exceedingly small and shallow depressions which travelled southwards down our east coasts and occasioned showers in several parts of Great Britain. Owing, however, to the prevalence of winds from a polar quarter temperature was decidedly below the average.

May 17-20.—On the 16th and 17th the anticyclone to the westward of us became gradually reduced in intensity and moved southwards. Depressions now began to approach our Islands from the Atlantic, while on the 18th and 19th a somewhat shallow but well-marked system (No. XVIII.*) travelled in an unusual course from Germany to the south of Norway and away to the northward of our Islands. The most important disturbance of all, however, was that of the 19th to 21st (No. XIX.*), the centre of which passed across the northern parts of Ireland and England on the night of the 19th, subsequently travelling first in a northerly direction over the North Sea, and afterwards in a north-westerly direction to the northward of the Shetlands. During its progress heavy rain fell in many parts of the United Kingdom, followed in some cases by showers of sleet or hail and local thunderstorms. The wind rose to a gale on nearly all coasts, the Westerly to North-westerly gale which prevailed over the Irish Sea on the 20th being of exceptional severity for so late a period in the season.

May 21-23.—The type of pressure distribution was at this time north-westerly. Between the 22nd and 24th a shallow depression moved southwards from the south of Sweden to western Germany, and although the main system had little effect upon the weather of our Islands, the secondary disturbances by which it was attended occasioned showers and local thunderstorms in some parts of Great Britain.

May 24-31.—An anticyclone which had previously existed to the south-westward of the British Islands, now extended north-eastwards across our northern districts to Scandinavia. North-easterly winds therefore became general, with fair weather in the north and north-west, but with cloudy weather and occasional showers in the more southern parts of the kingdom. Thunder was heard over central England on the 26th. The temperature of the period was slightly above the average in Ireland and Scotland, but below the normal over England, where the daily maxima seldom reached 65°. At the close of the month the anticyclone in the north was beginning to disperse and the general conditions were again becoming unsettled.

* See Section II. and Map 2 Plate X., for the history and tracks of depressions.