

SUMMARY of the OBSERVATIONS made at the STATIONS included in the DAILY and WEEKLY WEATHER REPORTS, for the CALENDAR MONTH,

MAY 1897.

(Issued as a Supplement to the Weekly Weather Report, 1897.)

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PUBLISHED BY EYRE AND SPOTTISWOODE, EAST HARDING STREET, FLEET STREET, E.C.; JOHN MENZIES & Co., 12, HANOVER ST., EDINBURGH, and 90, WEST NILE STREET, GLASGOW; AND HODGES, FIGGIS, & Co., LIMITED, 104, GRAFTON STREET, DUBLIN.

General Summary.—The weather was very changeable at the beginning and also at the end of May, with thunderstorms in many places. During the middle portion of the month, however, the conditions were mostly fair and dry. Pressure agreed fairly with the normal, but temperature was low, especially in the north and east; the winds were very variable; rainfall was in excess of the average at many northern stations, and also over the English Channel, but showed a deficit in most other regions; bright sunshine was largely in excess of the normal over the United Kingdom generally.

Pressure.—*Mean at 8 a.m.* ranged from 30·00 ins. at Jersey, and 29·95 ins. or more over nearly the whole of England and Ireland, to between 29·85 ins. and 29·90 ins. in the north of Scotland. The general distribution agreed very closely with the normal, as also did the actual values, a slight deficit being, however, reported over the northern parts of the kingdom, and a slight excess in the more central and southern districts. *Highest* readings were registered on the 16th, when the barometer rose to 30·5 ins. and upwards in the north-eastern parts of Great Britain, and to 30·4 ins. and upwards in all other localities excepting the extreme south of England. *Lowest* readings were registered between the 27th and 29th, when the mercury fell to between 29·1 ins. and 29·2 ins. in many parts of Ireland and Scotland, and to 29·4 ins. or less in all other parts of the kingdom. *Range* was somewhat large for the time of year in the west and north, but moderate elsewhere.

Depressions.—During the first week or so numerous depressions skirted our extreme northern coasts in the direction shown approximately by the arrow A in map 2, Pl. V., while from the 10th to the 12th a well-marked disturbance moved in a very irregular track over Denmark and the south of Scandinavia. Towards the close of the month some shallow systems spread directly over western Europe from the Atlantic, their centres failing, however, to advance beyond our own western coasts.

Anticyclones.—The only well-defined anticyclone noticed in our immediate neighbourhood spread in from the Atlantic between the 11th and 13th, and ultimately joined another system existing over northern Europe. The combined area remained in force over all but our extreme southern districts until about the 21st, when it gradually dispersed. Early in the month the highest pressures lay to the southward or south-westward of our Islands, while at the close of the time they were located over Scandinavia and northern Russia.

Winds varied greatly in direction from time to time and in different parts of the kingdom, the “roses” on Map 1, Pl. V., giving little evidence of any predominating current. Gales were rare in the east and south, but somewhat frequent for the time of year in the west and north; at Aberdeen, Ardrossan, and Donaghadee they were experienced on five days, and at Wick on as many as eight.

Temperature.—*Mean at sea level* ranged from 53° and upwards in some portions of the south of England, and from 52° and upwards over that district as a whole, to a little below 45° in the Shetlands and Hebrides, the general distribution over the intervening regions showing a fair agreement with the normal. The actual values were, however, below the average* the deficit varying greatly in different parts of the kingdom, but being upon the whole greatest in the northern and eastern districts. *Highest* readings were recorded on somewhat irregular dates in the different localities, but mainly on the 17th or 18th in the west, and on the 30th or 31st in the east. In very few places, however, did the thermometer rise much above 70°, and at a large number of stations it remained appreciably below that point. *Lowest* readings were observed as a rule between the 11th and 13th, when frost occurred in most districts; on the surface of the ground this was sufficiently keen to cause injury to vegetation. *Range* was fairly normal for the time of year. *Vapour Tension* ranged from 0·32 in. and upwards at several stations in the south-western parts of Great Britain, and also at Ardrossan, to between 0·24 in. and 0·26 in. in the north-west of England and the east of Scotland. *Relative Humidity* varied from between 90 and 95 per cent on our extreme north and north-west coasts, to 72 per cent. at Valencia Island, 69 per cent. in London and 67 per cent. at Liverpool.

Rainfall was in excess of the average* in many parts of Scotland and the north of Ireland, as well as at some of the English Channel stations. In most other places a deficit was shown, the amount in some of the eastern and central parts of England being less than half the normal. The largest aggregates reported were 5·7 ins. at Glencarron, 4·5 ins. at Fort William, and 3·5 ins. at Laudale and Stonyhurst; the smallest being 0·5 in. at Dungeness, 0·7 in. at the North Foreland, and 0·8 in. at Geldeston, and Holyhead. Excepting in the extreme northern and north-western districts the number of rainy days was small; at Marchmont, Shields, Scarborough, Spurn Head, Loughborough, and Roche's Point, there were only 10 days, and at Oxford only eight days with a measurable quantity. Between the 10th and 12th showers of snow, sleet, or graupel, were experienced in many places, the falls in the northern and eastern districts being in some cases heavy and frequent.

Bright Sunshine exceeded the average* amount in all localities excepting the Channel Islands, where there was a somewhat large deficiency. More than 55 per cent. of the possible duration was recorded on many parts of our western and southern coasts, and as much as 60 per cent. at Southport. At several of the Irish and Scotch stations, however, the per-centage was not much over 40, and at Fort Augustus it was as low as 36.

* The averages employed are—*Pressure and Temperature* for the 25 years, 1871–95; *Rainfall* for the 30 years, 1866–95; and *Bright Sunshine* for the 15 years, 1881–95.