

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

FEBRUARY 1897.

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

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General Summary.—The weather of February was extremely changeable, with considerable falls of snow and rain over England in the opening week. Later on the weather improved somewhat over England, but became less settled in Ireland and Scotland, with heavy rain on the 24th and 25th. Lightning was seen in the north of Scotland on the 24th, and aurora in the same district between the 24th and 27th. Pressure was above the average; temperature was high, especially in the south; the winds were mainly from between West and South; rainfall was in excess of the normal over England and also on our extreme north-west coasts; bright sunshine was very deficient, especially in the west and south.

Pressure.—*Mean at 8 a.m.* ranged from between 30·10 ins. and 30·17 ins. over the Channel and south of England, to between 29·80 ins. and 29·75 ins. in the extreme north of Scotland. In the latter region the values were slightly below the average,* but in all other places they were above it, the excess being greatest (0·10 in. to 0·15 in.) over the southern parts of the kingdom. *Highest* readings were observed as a rule on the 15th and 16th, when the barometer rose to 30·5 ins. and upwards over England and Ireland, and to 30·3 ins. and upwards in the north of Scotland. At many of our southern stations, however, the readings on the 21st or 22nd were above 30·6 ins., while in the Scilly and Channel Islands the barometer rose slightly above 30·7 ins. *Lowest* readings occurred over Ireland and England on the 1st or 2nd, when the barometer fell below 29·2 ins. in most of the western and southern districts. In Scotland, however, the lowest readings were observed either on the 25th or 28th, the mercury on the former occasion touching 28·9 ins. at Sumburgh Head. *Range* was moderate.

Depressions.—During the first week several shallow depressions either advanced or spread over our islands from the westward, the most important systems being those which moved along the Channel and south of England on the 5th and 6th. Towards the close of the month some larger and deeper disturbances began to skirt our extreme north-western and northern coasts, their centres advancing in each successive case closer to our islands, and finally passing outside the north of Scotland. On the night of the 20th a well-marked secondary system passed rapidly eastwards across the northern parts of Ireland and England.

Anticyclones were rarely observed in our own immediate neighbourhood. On the 10th and 11th, however, a rather large system spread over us from the southward, while on the 14th a still larger area was formed over Western Europe generally, the latter system ultimately extending over nearly the entire Continent. After the 17th its influence was confined to the more southern countries, but on the 21st and 22nd, and again on the 27th, it extended temporarily over the greater part of the United Kingdom.

Winds were chiefly from points between West and South. Gales were somewhat rare for the time of year, and were as a rule of no great strength, the most important being that which sprang up suddenly from the Westward over the northern parts of Ireland and England on the night of the 20th.

Temperature.—*Mean at sea level* ranged from 48° and upwards on our extreme south-west coasts to 38° and less at inland stations in the north of Scotland, areas of relative cold being observed also over the northern parts of Ireland and England. The mean distribution agreed fairly with the normal, but the actual values exceeded the average* in all but the extreme northern districts, the excess amounting to over 4° at several stations in the south of England. *Highest* readings occurred, as a rule, at various times between the 22nd and 26th, when the thermometer exceeded 55° in most places, and touched the unusually high level of 64° at Aberdeen. *Lowest* readings were observed in the north of Scotland on the 3rd or 4th, when the thermometer fell to zero at Lairg and Nairn, and to -7° at Braemar. Over England and Ireland the absolute minima occurred on various days in the month, but were, as a rule, not more than five or six degrees below the freezing point. In the latter countries the extreme range was moderate, but in the north of Scotland it was very large—as much as 61° at Braemar, and 58° at Nairn. *Vapour Tension* ranged from 0·31 in. at Scilly and 0·30 in. at Jersey to 0·20 in. or less in the north-east of Scotland. *Relative Humidity* exceeded 90 per cent. over the greater part of the United Kingdom, and was as high as 97 per cent. at Jersey; in the east of Scotland, however, it diminished to only 81 per cent. at Aberdeen.

Rainfall exceeded the average* over the greater part of England, as well as in the north-west of Ireland and at some stations in the west of Scotland. Elsewhere there was a deficiency, the amount in the east of Scotland being in some cases less than half, and at Aberdeen less than one-fourth of the normal. The largest aggregates reported were 8·1 ins. at Arlington, 7·9 ins. at Fort William, and 6·3 ins. at Glencarron; the smallest being 0·6 in. at Wick and Aberdeen, and 0·9 in. at Nairn, Leith, and Durham. The heaviest individual falls occurred in the south and east of England on the 4th or 5th, and in the western parts of Ireland and Scotland on the 24th or 25th; at Fort Augustus 2·2 ins. fell on the 25th, while at Fort William 1·7 ins. was collected both on that and the previous day. Considerable falls of snow were experienced over the northern, midland, and eastern parts of England between the 2nd and 5th.

Bright Sunshine was very deficient, especially in the west and south, where it amounted in some cases to less than half the average.* The per-centage of the possible amount ranged from 29 at Aberdeen, and 24 at Colwyn Bay, to 10 at Fort William, London, and Pembroke.

* 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.