

MONTHLY WEATHER REPORT.

FEBRUARY 1887.

SECTION I.

GENERAL SUMMARY FOR THE MONTH.

THE weather experienced during this month was unusually fine, dry, and bright. Pressure was much above the average, and its range, though considerable in the extreme north, was slight elsewhere. There were no important depressions observed immediately over our Islands, the distribution of pressure having been almost continuously anticyclonic. Temperature was high in Ireland and Scotland, but rather low over England and the Channel, and its range was somewhat large. Rainfall was deficient, except in the Shetlands, Hebrides, and west of Scotland, and the amount of Sunshine was unusually large for the time of year.

February 1-3.—The dominant system of pressure distribution during these few days was cyclonic, and the type south-westerly, the gradients being somewhat steep, especially on the 3rd. Temperature was high for the time of year, and the winds Southerly to South-westerly, blowing a gale at times in the west and north, and a strong to moderate breeze elsewhere. Rain fell abundantly in the extreme north and west, but there was very little in the east and south, where, however, cloud and some showers were experienced, with bright intervals. A large and well-marked depression (No. IX.*) passed by our north-western coasts, in a north-easterly direction between the 2nd and 3rd, after which the barometer rose fast, and the distribution of pressure changed completely.

February 4-5 was a transitional period in which the cyclonic system referred to above was passing away, while anticyclone conditions were spreading over the British Isles from the southward and south-westward. The barometer was rising everywhere, and the weather improving, though the showers had not quite ceased either in the west and north of our Islands, or on the eastern shores of the North Sea. Temperature was falling over Great Britain, rising in Ireland, and towards night began to give way generally.

February 6-17.—This was a period of anticyclonic conditions, the system advancing immediately over our Islands from the westward early on the 6th, where it caused a rapid increase of pressure and fall of temperature. Sharp night frosts occurred over the inland districts, but the amount of fog was singularly small for such a decidedly anticyclonic system in winter, while the anticyclonic circulation of wind was unusually well developed. On the following day the system had moved considerably to the eastward, causing South-easterly and Southerly breezes, of an anticyclonic type, to spread over the kingdom, and producing some recovery of temperature over the British Isles, especially in the north-west, while a fall took place on the Continent. The weather, however, remained very fine, except in the extreme west, and at some of the continental stations, where slight rain fell, and the air became rather foggy over England. These conditions continued with very slight

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

modification till the 10th—cold nights being followed by comparatively mild days, and dry weather continuing almost everywhere. On the 10th a large shallow depression advanced over northern Europe from the north-westward, and owing to its influence the anticyclonic system broke up into two parts, one of which moved westward, and occupied a position more directly to the northward of us than it had done previously; the wind over the United Kingdom consequently became more generally Easterly, but the weather remained dry, and temperature was a little higher. On the night of February 12th another large depression advanced over the extreme north of Europe from the north-westward, and the result was that the anticyclone receded still further in a westerly direction (see daily charts for the 13th), and for a little while North-westerly winds and showers were felt over Scandinavia, the north of Scotland, and the North Sea, while fresh North-easterly breezes continued in the south and south-east. This disturbance soon passed off, and the next low-pressure area which affected us spread over our area from the southward on the 14th. This system, however, soon passed away, and the 15th found us with the anticyclonic conditions restored, the centre of the system being over the eastern shores of the North Sea. Easterly winds and dry weather prevailed over France and the southern parts of England, while South-westerly winds and some showers were felt in the north. Frosts and fogs were soon felt over the inland counties, the former being especially sharp early on the 17th, just as a shallow depression was approaching our north-western coasts.

February 18-25.—This period was throughout partially cyclonic and partially anticyclonic, the former condition being prevalent mainly over the northern and the latter over the southern parts of our area. Thus, while strong South-westerly and Westerly winds, occasionally attaining the force of a gale in the more exposed places, were felt in the more northern regions with rather showery weather, light breezes and fine bright weather were experienced in the south, and the daily range of temperature was very large. It was during this interval that several cyclonic systems passed in a north-easterly direction outside our extreme north-western coasts, in about the direction shown by the broken arrow marked "A" on Map 2, Plate IV., but at such a distance that their characteristics cannot well be tabulated in Section II. One of these, however, was accompanied by a well-marked "V"-shaped secondary, which stretched far to the southward on the 18th (see the charts in the daily and weekly reports for that date), and caused more or less rain in nearly all parts of the kingdom. This was succeeded by a sudden shift of wind to the northward (after those from a southerly point had been prevalent), with a considerable fall of temperature. The anticyclonic system No. V. (Section II.) then advanced over the British Isles and France, and remained in our neighbourhood, more or less, till after the end of the month. It suffered some temporary interruption again on the 21st, as a less clearly marked "V" passed over us and disappeared to the eastward.

February 26-28.—The anticyclonic system (No. V.) now spread northwards again from France, and became the dominant system over western and north-western Europe, so that, although Southerly to Westerly breezes and gales were still felt in the far north, Easterly (North-east to South-east) winds were re-established at the southern stations, and the weather became very fine and dry, but rather foggy. These conditions were still in force when the month closed, and while the night temperatures were low, the days were mild and very bright.

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