

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

MARCH 1896.

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General Summary.—The weather of March was very unsettled, with frequent falls of rain, sleet, or snow. Thunder and lightning occurred in many parts of Ireland and England on the 3rd or 4th, and also at various times during the last ten days of the month. On the 4th a bright aurora was seen in the west and north generally. Pressure was below the average; temperature was high, especially in the south; the winds were chiefly from the Westward or South-westward; rainfall was heavy at all but the north-eastern stations, and bright sunshine, though fairly abundant in Scotland, was very deficient in most parts of England and Ireland.

Pressure.—*Mean at 8 a.m.* ranged from 29·92 ins. at Jersey, and 29·85 ins. or more over the Channel and south-west of England generally, to a little below 29·45 ins. in the Shetlands. The readings were in all cases below the average,* and as the deficit was least (0·1 in. or less) in the south of England, and greatest (about 0·3 in.) in the extreme north of Scotland, the gradient for Westerly winds was far steeper than that shown by the chart of normal values. *Highest* readings were observed on the 10th, when the barometer rose to 30·3 ins. and upwards over central and southern England, and to 30·1 ins. and upwards in all but the most northern parts of the kingdom. At some of our western and northern stations, however, the readings were equally high, or even a trifle higher, on the 30th or 31st. *Lowest* readings were recorded on the 3rd, when the barometer ranged from 28·3 ins. and less in Caithness and the Shetlands to 28·9 ins. and less in all but the extreme southern parts of the kingdom. *Range* was somewhat large for the time of year.

Depressions were very numerous, and while the centres of the main disturbances kept as a rule outside our north-western and northern coasts, their secondaries advanced more directly over the kingdom. The small depression which passed eastwards across Ireland and England on the night of the 26th was of considerable depth and moved with great rapidity, its progress being marked by strong Westerly gales on our southern coasts.

Anticyclones.—These lay as a rule well to the southward of our Islands. On the 9th, however, one of the systems extended very temporarily over us, while on the 29th and 30th a more permanent area spread in from the westward, the latter remaining in force during the first week of April.

Winds were mainly from the Westward or South-westward, with frequent gales on our western coasts. At Belmullet and Prawle Point there were 12, and at Holyhead 13 days with a wind force reaching 7 or more.

Temperature.—*Mean at sea level* ranged from 49° and upwards in the Scilly and Channel Islands to 43° and less over the northern parts of Great Britain generally and the inland parts of the north of Ireland, and to 41° and less in the north of Scotland. The general distribution agreed very closely with the normal, but the actual values were everywhere above the average,* the excess being large over England, and especially so in the extreme south, where it amounted in some cases to more than four degrees. *Highest* readings were registered mostly between the 22nd and 25th, when the thermometer rose to 55° and upwards in Ireland and Scotland, to 65° and upwards at many of the inland stations over England, and to 69° in London. *Lowest* readings occurred on various dates in the different districts. At some time in the month frost occurred at all but the coast stations in the west, south-west, and south-east, the lowest readings of all being in the north of Scotland on the 14th, when the thermometer fell to 20° at Nairn and 22° at Stornoway. *Range* was moderate. *Vapour Tension* ranged from 0·31 in. at Scilly, and 0·28 in. and upwards on our south-west coasts generally, to 0·20 in. and less in the east of Scotland. *Relative Humidity* varied from 78 per cent. at Aberdeen, 80 per cent. at Liverpool, and 83 per cent. in London, to 92 per cent. at Cambridge and 93 per cent. at Wick and Donaghadee.

Rainfall was in excess of the average* in all but the north-eastern parts of Great Britain, the difference from the normal being in most places very considerable. At several of the English stations, as well as in isolated parts of central Ireland and the south of Scotland, the total amount was more than twice as much as the average. The largest aggregates reported were 11·8 ins. at Glencarron, 9·7 ins. at Fort William, 9·2 ins. at Laudale, and 7·9 ins. at Glenlee; the smallest being 1·2 ins. at Leith, 1·6 ins. at Shields and Bawtry, and 1·8 ins. at Durham and Dungeness. The number of rainy days was very large, especially in the extreme west and north; at Sumburgh Head and Valencia there were only two days without a measurable quantity, and at Markree Castle only one. Falls of an inch or more in 24 hours occurred in the north of Scotland on the 2nd, at some of our western stations on the 7th, and in the south of England on the 20th, the largest amount of all being 1·5 ins. at Arlington on the 7th. Snow or sleet occurred rather frequently in the north during the early part of the month, and also after the 26th; on the 3rd and 4th it spread southwards over the greater part of the kingdom.

Bright Sunshine was deficient over Ireland and England but was a little in excess of the average* at most of the Scotch stations. The per-centage of the possible duration ranged from 36 at Braemar, and 34 at Aberdeen and Douglas, to 18 at Manchester (Oldham Road), Arley Cottage, and Dublin, and to 17 in London.

* 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.