

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

MARCH 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.—During the earlier half of the month rough wet weather prevailed over the whole of the United Kingdom, with occasional thunder and lightning in most places. Later on some improvement was reported in the south and east; elsewhere, however, the conditions remained very unsettled, with frequent, and, in some cases, heavy falls of rain. Aurora was seen in the north and west of Scotland between the 1st and 4th. Pressure was very low, especially in the north; temperature was above the average; the winds were rather variable in Ireland and Scotland, but chiefly Westerly or South-westerly over England; rainfall was greatly in excess of the normal; bright sunshine was deficient at all but a few of the English stations.

Pressure.—*Mean at 8 a.m.* ranged from 29·80 ins. at Jersey, and 29·70 ins. and upwards in the extreme south of England generally, to 29·45 ins. and less over the greater part of Scotland, and to very little above 29·40 ins. in the Hebrides. The actual values were considerably below the average,* especially over Ireland and the northern parts of Great Britain, where the deficit amounted to between 0·35 in. and 0·40 in., and the mean gradient for South-westerly winds over Ireland and England was unusually steep for the time of year. *Highest* readings were observed, as a rule, on the 6th or 7th, when the barometer rose to 30·3 ins. and upwards in the south-east of England, and to 30·1 ins. and upwards in most other parts of the kingdom. *Lowest* readings occurred between the 2nd and 3rd, the mercury falling below 28·6 ins. in the north of England and below 28·8 ins. in nearly all other districts. *Range* was somewhat large over England, but moderate over Ireland and Scotland.

Depressions were very numerous, and although in the majority of cases their centres moved outside our western and northern coasts, there were many instances in which they advanced directly over the United Kingdom. Among the latter class the most important was the deep secondary disturbance of the 2nd–3rd, which occasioned violent gales from between South and West over the south of England.

Anticyclones.—No well-defined anticyclones appeared in our own immediate neighbourhood, the nearest systems being situated either over northern or southern Europe or, as in the early part of the month, in each of those localities. Between the 6th and 7th, however, a slight high-pressure area advanced over our islands from the westward, while between the 19th and 21st, and again on the 25th, the southern anticyclone spread temporarily over our more southern districts.

Winds were mostly from the South-westward and Westward over England, but varied greatly in direction over Ireland and Scotland. Gales were unusually frequent, especially in the west and north, the number of days affected being as large as 18 at Aberdeen, and 14 at Wick, Holyhead, and Donaghadee. During the severe storm which occurred in the south of England on the 3rd, a Dines' pressure-tube anemometer registered, in squalls, a maximum velocity of 83 miles an hour at Scilly and 100 miles at Rousdon (Lyme Regis).

Temperature.—*Mean at sea level* ranged from 47° and upwards in the Scilly and Channel Islands and the extreme south of Cornwall to 40° or less in the Shetlands and the north of Scotland. The general distribution showed a very fair agreement with the normal, but the actual values were in nearly all cases above the average*, the excess being greatest over the inland and southern parts of England, where it amounted in most cases to over 3°. *Highest* readings occurred as a rule between the 21st and 23rd, when the thermometer rose to 60° and upwards in many parts of the United Kingdom, and to 64° in London and at Cambridge. *Lowest* readings were observed mostly on the 30th or 31st, when sharp frost occurred at many of the inland stations; at Braemar the sheltered thermometer fell to 15°, and at Fort Augustus and Hawes Junction to 20°. *Range* was moderate. *Vapour Tension* ranged from 0·30 in. at Scilly and 0·26 in. on our south and south-west coasts generally to 0·22 in. and less in the east of Scotland and the northern parts of England. *Relative Humidity* exceeded 90 per cent. on the south-west coast of England and also on our extreme north and north-west coasts, whence it decreased to 83 per cent. at Leith, Yarmouth and Valencia (Ireland), and to only 80 per cent. at Liverpool and in London.

Rainfall was largely in excess of the average,* especially over central Scotland, the north of Ireland, and the central and southern parts of England, where it amounted in many places to more than twice as much as the normal. The largest aggregates recorded were 10·2 ins. at Hawes Junction, 8·6 ins. at Glenlee, 8·2 ins. at Laudale, and 7·4 ins. at Glencarron and Killarney; the smallest being 1·7 ins. at Nairn. 2·1 ins. at Leith and Cambridge, and 2·2 ins. at York, Spurn Head, Yarmouth, and Dungeness. The number of rainy days was very large, especially in the west and north, where more than 25 were recorded at most stations; at Glencarron rain fell on as many as 30 days, while at Markree Castle there was not one day without a measurable quantity. Snow or sleet was of frequent occurrence during the earlier half of the month, and also between the 28th and 31st, especially in the more northern parts of the kingdom.

Bright Sunshine was deficient over the country generally, but was slightly in excess of the average* at a few stations in the central and south-eastern parts of England. The per-centage of the possible duration ranged from 40 at Westbourne, and 35 or more on several parts of our south and south-west coasts, to 17 at Fort Augustus and Braemar, and to 16 at Fort William and Glasgow.

* 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.