

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

MAY 1899.

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General Summary.—The weather of May was fine in the opening and closing weeks, but very unsettled in the middle portion of the month, with frequent rains, and occasional thunderstorms in most districts. Pressure was above the average; temperature was low, especially in the north; the winds were rather variable, but mainly from the Eastward or North-eastward over Great Britain; rainfall was mostly in excess of the average, but was slightly deficient in the north-west of Scotland and the south of England; bright sunshine differed but little in amount from the normal.

Pressure.—*Mean at 8 a.m.* was extremely uniform, the values being a little above 30·00 ins. over Great Britain, but a little below it in Ireland; the difference between the readings at any two stations did not, however, amount to more than 0·07 in. The mean values were everywhere above the average,* the excess being very small on our extreme south-west coasts, but rather large (0·10 in. or more) in the north of Scotland. *Highest* readings occurred mostly on the 28th, when the barometer rose to 30·45 ins. and upwards over nearly the whole kingdom, and to 30·5 ins. and upwards in the western and central districts. Over the northern parts of Great Britain the highest readings (30·5 ins. and upwards) were recorded on the 6th. *Lowest* readings occurred on the 15th or 16th, when the barometer fell a little below 29·0 ins. in the north of Scotland, and below 29·4 ins. in all other localities excepting the south of England, where it did not go much below 29·5 ins. *Range* was moderate.

Depressions.—During the middle portion of the month several depressions advanced over our islands, mostly from the westward. The systems were usually shallow and often very complex in form, the best defined being:—(1) a small disturbance which was developed over the north-east of England on the 15th, and which afterwards moved slowly away to the northward; and (2) an equally well marked depression which moved quickly in a north-easterly direction across Ireland and Scotland on the 18th.

Anticyclones.—Two such systems were observed. The first spread down from the northward on the 3rd, and remained over northern and north-western Europe until the 8th, when it began to move away to the eastward. The second extended over our islands from the north-westward on the 25th and 26th, and ultimately embraced nearly the whole of Europe. Its central area lay for the most part over the United Kingdom, but at the close of the month was drifting away to the eastward.

Winds varied a good deal in direction, especially in Ireland. Over Great Britain there was a general predominance of breezes from the Eastward or North-eastward. Gales were slight and few in number, the most important being associated with the depressions of the 15th–18th, when the wind blew hard in many parts of Ireland and England. On our extreme north and north-west coasts there was an entire absence of gales.

Temperature.—*Mean at sea level* ranged from 53° and upwards in the Scilly and Channel Islands, and many parts of the south of England, to 46° and less at inland places in the north of Scotland, and to 45° and less in the Shetlands. The general distribution over our islands assumed less of the summer type than is usual in May, and the actual values were in nearly all cases below the average,* the deficit being upon the whole greatest in the northern and central parts of Scotland. *Highest* readings occurred mostly on the 31st, when the thermometer rose to between 70° and 75° in many parts of Great Britain, and also at one or two of the Irish stations. *Lowest* readings were recorded as a rule between the 4th and 6th, when frost occurred over the northern and inland parts of the kingdom generally; at Lairg and Braemar the sheltered thermometer fell to 25°, and at Fort Augustus and Glenlee to 27°, readings as low as 28° and 29° being observed in several other parts of Great Britain. Frost was also experienced in many places on the 27th and 28th. *Range* was not large for the time of year, but amounted to between 40° and 45° at several of the northern and central stations, and to as much as 47° at Loughborough. *Vapour Tension* ranged from between 0·30 in. and 0·34 in. on our south and south-west coasts, to 0·26 in. in the east of Scotland generally, and to a little below 0·24 in. at Aberdeen. *Relative Humidity* exceeded 80 per cent. at most of the coast stations, and amounted to 87 per cent. at Pembroke, and 88 per cent. at Dungeness. In the inland districts, and also on the west coast of Ireland, the proportion was less than 80 per cent., the lowest values being 73 per cent. in London, and 72 per cent. at Aberdeen and Liverpool.

Rainfall was in excess of the average* over the country generally, the only districts with any general deficit being the north-west of Scotland and south of England. Even in those localities the deficiency was slight. The excess was greatest over the south of Scotland and the extreme north of England; at Leith and Shields the total fall was more than twice as much as the normal. The largest aggregates reported were 5·1 ins. at Glenlee, 4·7 ins. at Roche's Point, and 4·6 ins. at Glencarron and Glasgow; the smallest being 0·9 in. at Hurst Castle, 1·0 in. at Dungeness, and 1·2 in. at Southampton. Heavy falls occurred at many of the western and northern stations between the 16th and 19th, the largest amounts in 24 hours being 1·5 in. at Glencarron and Killarney, and 1·4 in. at Valencia.

Bright Sunshine varied somewhat in duration in different parts of the kingdom, but showed upon the whole no great divergence from the average.* The percentage of the possible amount ranged from 54 at Scilly and Guernsey and 50 or more at several of the English Channel stations, to 35 or less at several places in the northern parts of Great Britain, and to only 29 at Fort Augustus, Glasgow, and Newcastle-on-Tyne.

* 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.