

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

MAY 1901.

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General Summary.—With the exception of two unsettled thundery periods,—one between the 5th and 10th, and the other during the closing week—the weather of May was fine, warm, and sunny, especially in the more western and southern parts of the Kingdom. A striking feature was observed on the 3rd, when, notwithstanding the existence of a large anticyclone directly over the regions affected, thunderstorms or thunder only occurred in many parts of Scotland and the north-west of England. Pressure and temperature were above the average; the winds were chiefly Northerly or North-easterly over England, but variable in Ireland and Scotland; rainfall was very deficient in all but our north-eastern districts; bright sunshine was greatly in excess of the normal.

Pressure.—*Mean at 8 a.m.* was extremely uniform, the values ranging between 30·10 ins. and 30·14 ins. in all districts excepting the south of England and the west of Ireland, where the readings were slightly below 30·10 ins. The mean distribution over our islands was anticyclonic, and the actual values were in all cases above the average,* the excess being small in the extreme south of England, but rather large (0·20 in. and more) in the north of Scotland. *Highest* readings were recorded on the 23rd or 24th, when the barometer rose to 30·5 ins. and upwards over the entire northern half of the United Kingdom, and to 30·3 ins. and upwards on all but our extreme southern coasts. *Lowest* readings were observed over the country generally on the 7th, the mercury falling to 29·2 ins. and less over the northern parts of England and Ireland, and to 29·4 ins. and less in all other localities excepting the south-west of Ireland. On our extreme north-west coasts the lowest readings, 29·1 ins. and less, were observed on the 31st. *Range* differed but little from the normal for the time of year.

Depressions.—The only depressions of any importance were:—(1) A well defined system which travelled slowly south-eastwards directly across our islands between the 6th and 9th, and which afterwards dispersed over Holland; and (2) a larger and deeper disturbance which moved in a north-north-easterly direction outside our extreme west and north-west coasts on the 30th and 31st. Between the 25th and 27th a large and complex, but very shallow, low pressure system extended over the United Kingdom from Southern and South-Western Europe.

Anticyclones.—Two such systems were observed. The first spread over Western Europe from the northward at the beginning of the month, but passed away to the Atlantic after the 4th. The second, a system originally of moderate intensity, extended over our islands from the south-westward on the 11th and afterwards became united with an area of far greater size and height lying over Northern Europe. The combined system underwent great modifications, both in intensity, and also in the position of its central area, but remained in existence over our islands and a considerable portion of the Continent until after the 25th, when it drifted away in a northerly direction.

Winds.—Over England the prevailing current was from the Northward or North-eastward, but in Ireland and Scotland the winds showed great variability; at Stornoway and Valencia there was a large proportion of calm weather. Scarcely any gales were reported, the only cases occurring on our extreme south-western, western and northern coasts.

Temperature.—*Mean at sea level* ranged from 55° and upwards at most inland stations in the south of England, and from 53° and upwards over the inland parts of the United Kingdom generally, to 50° and less on the north and north-east coasts of Great Britain, and to rather below 48° in the Shetlands. The distribution over our islands was of a distinct summerlike type, and the mean values were everywhere above the average,* the excess being small at the coast stations, but larger in the interior, and especially over the inland parts of Scotland; at Lairg and Glencarron it amounted to more than 4°. *Highest* readings occurred over England mostly on the 29th, when the thermometer rose to 80° or more in several places and to 85° at Cambridge. In Scotland the highest readings were observed as a rule between the 21st and 23rd, when 78° was reached at Lairg and Fort Augustus; in Ireland they occurred at varying times in different parts of the country, the highest reading reported being 77° at Foynes. *Lowest* readings occurred on various dates, but mostly between the 5th and the 12th, when slight frost occurred in many parts of Great Britain. *Range* was large, especially in the inland districts; at several places it amounted to more than 45°, and at Cambridge to as many as 52°. *Vapour Tension* ranged from 0·35 in. at Pembroke, 0·34 in. at Dungeness, and 0·32 in. or more on our extreme western and southern coasts generally to 0·29 in. or less in the east of Scotland and the northern and central parts of England. *Relative Humidity* varied from 91 per cent. at Spurn Head and 89 per cent. at Portland Bill, to 75 per cent. at Bath, and 74 per cent. in London and at Liverpool.

Rainfall amounted to less than the average* in all localities excepting the east of Scotland and the extreme north of England, where there was an excess,—due in the latter district to a heavy fall which occurred on the 26th, when 2·2 ins. were measured at Alnwick Castle and 1·4 in. at Shields. Over a considerable portion of England, and also in South Wales and the west of Scotland, the total fall was less, and in many places much less, than half the average. The largest aggregates reported were 3·1 ins. at Alnwick Castle, 3·0 ins. at Marchmont and 2·8 ins. at Valencia (Ireland); the smallest being 0·5 in. at Sumburgh Head, 0·6 in. at Spurn Head, Felixstowe and Dungeness, and 0·7 in. at Scarborough, Bawtry, Loughborough, London, Pembroke and Cullompton. The number of rainy days was everywhere small, less than 10 being reported in many parts of the United Kingdom, only 5 at Dungeness, Southampton, Pembroke, and Scilly, and only 4 at Spurn Head.

Bright Sunshine was considerably in excess of the average,* especially in the west and south. Over the greater part of England and Ireland more than 50 per cent. of the possible amount was recorded, and at several coast stations in the west and south more than 60 per cent., the highest values of all being 69 per cent. at Falmouth and 66 per cent. at Tenby. The smallest percentage recorded was 37 at Deerness, but less than 45 per cent. was observed at many stations in the northern parts of Great Britain.

* The averages employed are—*Pressure and Temperature* for the 30 years 1871–1900; *Rainfall* for the 35 years 1866–1900; and *Bright Sunshine* for the 20 years 1881–1900. (The averages will be published shortly as an appendix to the “Weekly Weather Report.”)