

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

MAY 1891.

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General Summary.—The weather of May was changeable and inclement, especially about the middle of the month, when sharp frosts and snow showers were reported over nearly the entire kingdom. Pressure and temperature were each below the average; the winds were variable in direction, but gales were somewhat numerous on our north and east coasts; rainfall was mostly in excess of the normal; and bright sunshine was very deficient, especially over the northern and central parts of England. Thunderstorms were somewhat frequent over England.

Pressure.—*Mean for the Month at 8 a.m.* ranged from between 29·80 ins. and 29·83 ins. in the south-west of our Islands to very little above 29·75 ins. on our extreme north-east and north-west coasts and to about 29·76 ins. in the Shetlands. The distribution was therefore abnormal and very uniform, the greatest difference between the mean values at any two stations being less than one-tenth of an inch. A deficiency from the average* was reported in all places, its amount varying from about 0·10 in. in the north of Scotland and about 0·15 in. on our extreme south-west coasts to little short of 0·20 in. in the east of England. *Highest* values were recorded on the 12th, when the barometer rose to between 30·2 ins. and 30·3 ins. in nearly all parts of the kingdom. *Lowest* readings were observed mainly on the 1st, when the barometer fell to 29·1 ins., or less, in some of the northern districts and to 29·5 ins. or less in the south. In the extreme south and south-east of England, however, the mercury fell a little lower on the 18th. *Range* was moderate.

Depressions were very numerous for the time of year, their centres travelling as a rule in an easterly direction over France or the southern parts of our Islands, and then passing in a north-easterly or northerly course over the North Sea. Between the 23rd and the 29th, however, a shallow disturbance made a complete circuit round Ireland and England, passing first in an easterly direction over our southern counties and afterwards travelling in a westerly course over the northern parts of England and Ireland to the position from which it originally advanced.

Anticyclones.—On the 11th a large anticyclone extended over our Islands from the northward, but by the night of the 14th it had travelled away to the westward of Ireland. No other anticyclones were observed in our neighbourhood during the month.

Winds were very variable. In the south and east of England there was a somewhat large proportion of breezes from the Westward, and in the extreme north of Scotland an undue prevalence of North-easterly and Northerly breezes, but in the more central districts there was no marked predominance of winds from any particular quarter. Gales were rather frequent for the time of year on our north-west, north, and east coasts: at Mullaghmore there were as many as 9, at Stornoway 7, and at Spurn Head 6. In the south and south-west, however, there were very few.

Temperature.—*Mean at sea level* ranged from a little above 52° in the Channel Islands and in some parts of our extreme southern counties to 47°, or a little less, over Central Ireland, and to 45°, or less, in the Shetlands and Hebrides. The general distribution was of a fairly normal character, but the actual values were everywhere below the average,* the deficit being least (one to two degrees) in the south of England, and greatest (three to four degrees) over Central Ireland. *Highest* readings were recorded between the 11th and 13th, when the thermometer rose above 75° in many of the inland parts of Great Britain, the highest values of all being 82° at Southampton and Llandoverly and 81° at Loughborough. *Lowest* readings were observed mostly between the 17th and 19th, when sharp frost occurred in nearly all places; at Durham the thermometer fell to 23° and at York and Newton Reigny to 24°. *Range* was very large, being more than 45° at many of the inland stations, 51° at Durham, Strathfield Turgiss, and Southampton, 52° at York, and 55° at Llandoverly. *Vapour Tension* ranged from a little below 0·26 in. in the north of England and the east of Scotland to between 0·30 in. and 0·32 in. over our southern counties. *Relative Humidity* varied from 74 per cent. at Liverpool and 77 per cent. in London to 90 per cent. at Stornoway, and to very little below that point on the south coasts of England.

Rainfall was least heavy in the south of Scotland and the northern parts of England and Wales, the smallest amounts of all being 0·8 in. at Holyhead and 1·4 in. at Shields and Newton Reigny. In the north of Scotland and the south of England the fall was mostly in excess of 2·5 ins., while at many of the Irish stations it exceeded 3 ins., the largest of all being 4·6 ins. at Killarney. At Glencarron an aggregate of 5·3 ins. was recorded, but at other stations in the same neighbourhood the amount was much smaller. Compared with the average* the values showed a deficit in several of the more northern parts of Great Britain, but an excess in other portions of the United Kingdom. The number of days with rain was somewhat large, excepting in the north of England.

Bright Sunshine.—The amount recorded was below the average* in most places, but a little above it in the north of Scotland, as well as at one or two of the Irish stations. The per-centage of the possible duration was below 35 at most of the northern and central stations, and as low as 25 at Fort Augustus and 27 at Edinburgh and Blackpool. On our south and south-west coasts, however, there was more than 40 per cent. of the possible amount, the highest values of all being 50 at Jersey and 46 at Falmouth and Valencia.

* The averages employed are—*Pressure* and *Temperature* for the 20 years, 1871–90; *Rainfall* for the 25 years, 1866–91; *Bright Sunshine* for the 10 years, 1881–90.