

MONTHLY WEATHER REPORT.

APRIL 1886.

SECTION I.

GENERAL SUMMARY FOR THE MONTH.

THE weather of April was somewhat changeable; rough, wet, and mild till the 9th with South-westerly winds, then quieter, but cold, with North-easterly winds and some cold showers, separated by intervals of bright sunshine. In these clear periods the sunshine was warm, but the nights were cold, and the daily range of temperature large. Taken as a whole pressure was slightly below the average and the gradients (for South-westerly winds) were less steep than usual. Temperature was rather low except over the southern parts of Hampshire, and its range considerable. The winds varied greatly; the rainfall was in excess of the average over the north-western districts, but deficient in the east, while the amount of bright sunshine recorded was not very different from usual. Two depressions deserve special notice, one of which passed slowly in a south-easterly direction over England on the 10th, while the other appeared near Wick on the 27th, and caused sudden changes of temperature, especially in the north. The anticyclones presented no features worthy of special remark, but high pressures were at times very prevalent in the north and west.

April 1-4.—The distribution of pressure during this period was of a southerly and south-westerly type, and the dominant systems were cyclonic over our Islands, and anti-cyclonic over France. Winds from between South-east and South-west were consequently prevalent, and, as the depressions Nos. XXVII. and XXVIII.* passed near to or over our area, they increased to a strong gale in the west and north, and to a strong squally breeze in the south and east. Temperature was somewhat high, and while rain fell generally the amounts recorded were much greater at the western than at the eastern stations. Aurora was seen in the north of Scotland on the 4th.

April 5-9.—Some modification of the conditions just referred to now took place. The area of high pressure took up a more westerly position; the winds became more Westerly, and temperature fell a little. The rainfall decreased considerably, but cloudiness increased over England, and fogs appeared in the south. Two well-marked depressions, Nos. XXIX. and XXX.,* appeared during this interval, moving in a more easterly direction than those previously observed; one of them passed quickly away across Norway and Sweden, while the other, on reaching Scotland from the south-westward, took a more northerly course, and finally became filled up to the northward of the Shetland Isles.

During the whole of the period April 1-9 pressure remained high over south-eastern and southern Europe, but after the 5th a second high-pressure area began to appear over Spain, the southern parts of the Bay of Biscay and the south-west of France, and it was under these circumstances that the winds reported became more Westerly, as mentioned above, and the air cooler.

* See Section II. and Map 2 Plate VIII., for the history and tracks of depressions.

April 10-12.—The distribution of pressure during this interval was very complex; for as the depression last mentioned filled up, a new shallow system (No. XXXI.*) was developed over the north-western parts of our Islands and moving south-eastwards filled up over the south-east of France on the 11th. As this passed over us the barometer rose in the north, the wind backed round from South-west to South-east and East at the eastern stations, while it veered to North-west, North, and North-east in the west. Temperature fell decidedly, and cold showers of rain, sleet, and hail fell very generally. Another, but still more shallow depression lay over the North Sea on the 12th, separating an anticyclone over northern Europe from another over and to the westward of the Bay of Biscay, Spain, and Portugal, but this filled up very quickly, and left us with comparatively uniform readings (highest in the south-west) and with light variable North-westerly breezes.

During this time the continental reports showed that pressure was high over Russia, as well as to the westward of Spain, but lowest, at first over central Europe and then over the Mediterranean and Adriatic, the weather being cold, dull, and unsettled.

April 13-20.—The anticyclone over Russia moved away to the eastward, and as the barometer rose in the west and north the Atlantic high-pressure system moved north-eastwards to a position off our north-western and northern coasts, and finally to Finland and northern Europe. At the same time pressure remained lowest over the Mediterranean and France, and under these circumstances the wind remained moderate or light over our Islands, and veered round to North-east and East. The air was dry and temperature low, but as some shallow local disturbances appeared occasionally over the northern parts of France (notably on the 18th and 19th), a good deal of cloud was reported, except in the north-west, and cold showers fell in the south and east.

April 21-22.—The distribution of pressure now became more complex, owing to the temporary appearance, on the 21st, of a second high-pressure system over Spain, which caused Westerly breezes to appear over southern Europe. These in connexion with the Easterly winds prevailing over our Islands and the North Sea caused several local disturbances to appear over western Europe and the North Sea, and these drew down very cold Northerly winds over the United Kingdom, accompanied by an extremely unsettled state of the sky. The Spanish anticyclone, however, soon gave way, the local disturbances broke up, pressure in the south fell generally, and Easterly breezes again spread over the kingdom.

April 23-26.—A decided change took place. Pressure gave way completely over Spain and the Bay of Biscay, and also over the extreme north of Europe, but as it increased over the eastern parts of the British Isles and the North Sea, an anticyclone was formed over the latter region. (See No. VIII., p. 45.) A depression then moved northward from the Atlantic shores of the Peninsula, and as it did so the wind over the United Kingdom veered to South-east, and although the nights remained cold, especially in the east, the days became warmer. In France the thermometer rose to above 80° on some occasions, and at some of our own stations it reached 68° to 70° on the 24th. Rain fell in the west, while in the east the weather was fine, but thunderstorms soon afterwards set in over the south of England. In the north a very unusual change occurred on the 27th. (See next paragraph.)

April 27-28.—The weather now broke up suddenly, for, while the barometer fell decidedly over the Bay of Biscay, causing a freshening of wind from South-east and East on our south-western coasts, and local thunder showers in the south, a small, shallow, isolated depression was formed near Wick, and was accompanied by most extraordinary contrasts between the weather and temperature at stations comparatively close together. Thus at 8 a.m., 27th, there was a gentle breeze from West-south-west at Aberdeen, with a temperature of 60° ; at Wick the wind was equally light from the North-westward, with slight rain and a temperature of 49° , but at Sumburgh Head the wind was strong from North-east, snow and rain were

* See Section II. and Map 2 Plate VIII., for the history and tracks of depressions.

falling, and the thermometer stood at 36° , or twenty-four degrees lower than at Aberdeen. This system moved south-eastwards and eastwards, while that in the south-west spread north-eastwards, and Northerly to Easterly winds, cold weather, rain, with local thunderstorms spread over the kingdom.

April 29-30.—Another sudden change now ensued. The barometer rose quickly, the two low-pressure systems referred to above filled up, an anticyclone (No. IX.) appeared in the north-west, and dry North-easterly breezes set in generally, blowing strongly in the south, but falling light and backing to North-west in the north. This anticyclone subsequently moved southwards, and extended a long ridge in an easterly direction, so that while the fine weather still held in the west, south, and east, in the north rain fell on the 30th. Another small local depression then appeared for a time off our north-east coasts, while a rather larger (but unimportant) system passed eastwards over the south of France. The month closed, however, with cold but improving weather generally.