

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

MARCH 1898.

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General Summary.—With the exception of a few mild days about the middle of the month the weather of March was generally cold and changeable, with frequent showers of snow or sleet. Thunder and lightning occurred at several western stations between the 1st and 3rd, and bright aurora was seen over the northern parts of the United Kingdom on the 15th. Pressure was below the average in the west and north, but above it elsewhere; temperature was below the normal excepting in the west and north of Scotland; the winds were mainly from the Westward in Scotland, but from the Northward or North-eastward in Ireland and England, a prolonged and rather severe gale from the latter quarters being experienced between the 23rd and 27th; rainfall was deficient in all districts excepting the north of Scotland and the east of England; bright sunshine exceeded the average in the west and north, but was rather deficient in most other localities.

Pressure.—*Mean at 8 a.m.* ranged from 30·00 ins. and upwards in the west and south of Ireland to 29·85 ins. and less on the east coasts of England, and to 29·80 ins. and less in the north of Scotland. In the eastern, central, and southern parts of England the mean values were below the average*, but at all the more western and northern stations they were above it, the departure from the normal being, however, as a rule, very slight. *Highest* readings occurred over Ireland and the northern parts of Great Britain on the 25th, when the barometer in the extreme north and north-west rose slightly above 30·5 ins. In the south of England the highest values (30·2 ins. and upwards) were recorded either on the 10th or the 21st. *Lowest* readings were observed in the north on the 1st or 15th, when the barometer fell to between 29·2 ins. and 29·5 ins., similarly low values being recorded in the south and east of England on the 26th. *Range* was moderate in the northern districts, but slight in the south.

Depressions.—Until the concluding week very few depressions of importance were observed in the immediate neighbourhood of our islands, the centres of the large Atlantic disturbances keeping, as a rule, well away to the northward. An exception was, however, shown in the case of a rather deep system which moved south-eastwards across the North Sea on the 1st, and which occasioned gales from the North-westward over nearly the whole of our islands. After the 22nd the weather was affected, firstly, by a well-marked depression which passed rapidly south-eastwards across Scotland and along our east coasts to the Netherlands and Germany; and, secondly, by another and more complex disturbance which advanced over Switzerland and Western Germany from the southward, and which afterwards moved in an irregular path and dispersed over France.

Anticyclones.—Three such systems were observed. The first spread over our islands from northern Europe on the 7th, but soon broke into two portions, one moving away to the North-eastward and the other to the South-westward and Southward. The second advanced from the Atlantic on the 19th and remained with us until the 22nd, when it again receded westwards. The third spread temporarily over the northern parts of our islands from the northward on the 23rd and 24th, but moved away to the eastward on the 27th.

Winds varied considerably from time to time, but were mainly from the Westward in Scotland and from the Northward or North-eastward in England and Ireland. Gales were not very frequent for the time of year, but the Northerly and North-easterly gale which prevailed on our eastern, southern, and many parts of our western coasts between the 23rd and 27th was unusually prolonged, and in many places of considerable severity.

Temperature.—*Mean at sea level* ranged from a little above 45° at Scilly, and from 44° and upwards on our extreme south-west coasts generally, to between 39° and 40° in the north of Scotland and at many stations in the north and east of England. The general distribution agreed very closely with the normal, but the actual values were below the average* excepting in the west and north of Scotland, the deficit being greatest (2° to 3°) at many stations in the central and southern parts of England and Ireland. *Highest* readings occurred, as a rule, on the 17th or 18th, when the thermometer rose to 60° and upwards in several parts of Great Britain, and to 63° at Geldeston, Cambridge, Southampton, and the North Foreland. *Lowest* readings were observed at various times, but mostly between the 6th and 8th, when sharp frosts prevailed over the United Kingdom generally. In the screen the lowest readings observed were 9° at Braemar, 16° at Lairg, and 20° at Glenlee. *Range* was moderate. *Vapour Tension* ranged from 0·25 in. at Malin Head and 0·24 in. at Ardrossan and Scilly to between 0·18 in. and 0·20 in. over the east of Scotland and the northern and central parts of England. *Relative Humidity* varied from 94 per cent. at Cambridge and 93 per cent. at Ardrossan, Malin Head, and Loughborough to 80 per cent. at Valencia, and to only 76 per cent. at Aberdeen.

Rainfall exceeded the average* at most stations in the north of Scotland and also at many places in the east and south-east of England. Elsewhere there was a deficiency, the amount at several of the western and southern stations being less than half, and in some cases less than one-fourth, of the normal. The largest aggregates reported were 10·5 ins. at Glencarron, 6·9 ins. at Fort William, and 5·4 ins. at Stornoway; the smallest being 0·4 in. at Kilkenny and Hurst Castle, 0·5 in. at Blackpool and Cirencester, and 0·6 in. at Shirley and Hereford. Snow or sleet fell in most places during the first and last weeks in the month, the amount on the 25th being large in many parts of England.

Bright Sunshine was rather deficient in the eastern, central, and southern districts, but exceeded the average* at most of the western and northern stations. The percentage of the possible duration ranged from 46 at Falmouth, 45 at Llandudno, and 44 at Douglas and Newquay, to 20 at Sheffield and 19 in London and at Plumstead Common and Watergate (Emsworth).

* 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.