

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

MAY 1898.

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ISSUED BY THE METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE, 63, VICTORIA STREET, LONDON; R. H. SCOTT, F.R.S., SECRETARY.
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General Summary.—The weather of May was for the most part cool and very changeable, with frequent rain in nearly all districts, and occasional falls of hail, sleet or snow in the north. Thunder and lightning were observed (chiefly over England) between the 1st and 4th, the 11th and 13th, the 20th and 25th, and on the 31st. Pressure and temperature were each below the average; the winds, though rather variable, were mainly from some Northerly point; rainfall was largely in excess of the normal over the country generally, but rather deficient in the north of England and the southern and central parts of Scotland; bright sunshine was less than the average, excepting in the extreme north and north-west.

Pressure.—*Mean at 8 a.m.* ranged from a little below 29·90 ins. in the west of Ireland to 29·82 ins. and less on the east coasts of Great Britain, and to about 29·75 ins. in the Shetlands, the gradient over our islands being slight and favourable for winds from a more Northerly quarter than is usual in May. The mean values were in all cases below the average,* the deficit being slight in Ireland, but rather large in the eastern parts of the United Kingdom. *Highest* readings occurred on the 7th in all the more southern districts, but on the 18th in the north, the barometer in each case rising above 30·3 ins. *Lowest* readings occurred on the 11th, when the barometer fell below 28·9 ins. over nearly the whole of Scotland and the north-east of England, and below 29·3 ins. at all but a few of the English Channel stations. *Range* was large for the time of year over the northern parts of Great Britain, but moderate elsewhere.

Depressions were rather numerous, the most important being observed between the 10th and 12th, when the centre of a deep system moved eastwards across Scotland and the North Sea, and eventually in a northerly and north-westerly direction over Norway. The depressions which advanced from the southward between the 18th and 20th occasioned heavy falls of rain in many parts of England.

Anticyclones.—The anticyclones observed in our immediate neighbourhood were of a very transient character. On the 6th–7th, the 16th and the 28th, one of these systems advanced temporarily over our islands from the westward or south-westward, while on the 18th a large area spread from northern Europe over all but the extreme southern parts of the Kingdom. In each case the system soon moved away in the direction from which it had originally advanced.

Winds varied a good deal from time to time, but at most stations there was a preponderance of breezes from some Northerly quarter (North-west to North-east). Gales were rather frequent for the time of year, 3 or 4 being reported in several places, and as many as 7 at Scilly.

Temperature.—*Mean at sea level* ranged from 54° at Jersey, and 53° and upwards at several stations in the south of England, to 47° and less in the north of Scotland, and to a little below 45° in the Shetlands. The general distribution was in fair accordance with the normal, but the actual values were in nearly all cases below the average,* the deficit being slight as a rule, but rather large in the north of Scotland. *Highest* readings occurred mainly on the 23rd or 24th, when the thermometer exceeded 70° at many of the English stations, and reached 76° in London and 77° at Cambridge. *Lowest* readings occurred at various times between the 13th and 17th, when frost occurred at most of the inland stations. In the screen the lowest readings were 26° at Lairg, and 28° at Nairn, Braemar and Glenlee, but on the surface of the grass the thermometer fell on the 13th to 17° at Ochertyre, and on the 14th to 21° at Fort William. *Range* was moderate. *Vapour Tension* ranged from 0·34 in. at Jersey, and 0·32 in. or more on our south coasts generally, to 0·26 in. or less in the Shetlands, the Hebrides and the east of Scotland. *Relative Humidity* varied from 92 per cent. at Malin Head, 89 per cent. at Dungeness, and 86 per cent. at Wick, to 76 per cent. at Liverpool, 75 per cent. at Aberdeen, and 73 per cent. at Leith.

Rainfall.—Over the United Kingdom, as a whole, the rainfall was largely in excess of the average,* the only regions with any general deficiency being the extreme north of England and the central and southern parts of Scotland. At several stations in the west and south of Great Britain the amount was more than twice as much as the normal. The largest aggregates reported were 6·2 ins. at Glencarron, 5·2 ins. at Llandudno, and 4·8 ins. at Shaftesbury; the smallest being 1·2 in. at Ardrossan, 1·6 in. at Durham and Spurn Head, and 1·7 in. at Leith and Bawtry. The number of days with rain was mostly large; at Stornoway and Markree Castle there were 24, and at Alnwick Castle and Southampton 25, while at Belmullet there were as many as 27 days with a measurable quantity. Falls exceeding an inch in 24 hours were experienced in isolated places at various times during the month, the largest being 1·3 in. both at Scarborough on the 20th and at Churchstoke on the 23rd. On the 2nd a severe hailstorm occurred in Plymouth and its vicinity, while on the 11th and 12th, the 16th, and even as late as the 31st, showers of snow or sleet were reported at several stations in the northern parts of Great Britain.

Bright Sunshine was less than the average* at all but the extreme northern and north-western stations, the deficiency being large in the eastern, central, and southern parts of England. The percentage of the possible duration ranged from 44 at Douglas (Isle of Man), 43 at Southport, and 42 at Fort Augustus and Falmouth, to 26 at Newcastle-on-Tyne, Rothamsted, and in London, and to 25 at 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.