

MONTHLY WEATHER REPORT.

APRIL 1885.

SECTION I.

GENERAL SUMMARY FOR THE MONTH.

THE weather of April was unusually quiet for the time of year. Pressure was decidedly below its normal value, although anticyclones were of frequent occurrence. Temperature was somewhat low generally, but rose to between 70° and 73° over England between the 19th and 21st, and its range was large. The winds were light and variable over England, but strong from South and South-east in the west; gales were rare, except in the extreme west and north-west; and Rainfall, though rather short of the average in the north-east and east, was slightly in excess at the western stations. Of bright sunshine, more than 50 per cent. of the possible duration was recorded in Jersey, and about 40 to 45 per cent. on our southern coasts, but only 28 per cent. was registered in the north-east of Ireland and 21 per cent. at York.

April 1.—The distribution of pressure over north-western Europe was of a complex character. A large depression, lying far to the northward of our Islands, was moving in a north-easterly direction along the coast of Norway, while a very angularly formed subsidiary disturbance was travelling eastwards over our Islands, causing sudden changes of wind from South-west to North, with rapid oscillations of temperature, and alternations of weather, from clear bright skies to heavy clouds and cold showers. The showers did not reach our south-eastern counties till night, and were then only slight, though the change of wind was decided.

April 2-5.—A well-formed anticyclone (No. XIII.) now advanced over Ireland and England from the westward, so that while the wind became Westerly at our northern stations, it veered to North and North-east in the south, and blew much more strongly from the last-named points than appeared likely from the gradients. Temperature fell quickly, and the weather became fine and dry, except on our extreme north-western and northern coasts, where some rain fell. Over Ireland and England the nights were very sharp, and haze or fog occurred in some places, the thermometer in the shade falling to between 22° and 29° , while on the grass the readings were from 8° to 10° lower. At 8 a.m. on the 3rd the system lay completely over Ireland and England, whence it moved north-eastwards to Scandinavia by the following morning (see maps in the Weekly and Daily Reports for these dates). The barometer then began to fall in the west, and a large cyclonic disturbance appeared off our extreme western coasts, and a second anticyclone over Spain, the latter being connected with that in the north by a "col." The anticyclonic system then gave way, and disturbed weather spread over the country.

April 6-12.—This period was, so far as our Islands are concerned, marked by winds and weather of a cyclonic character; during its continuance some apparently deep depressions

arrived off our western coasts. One of these passed northwards, at too great a distance from us for its movements to be accurately described here, but the second (No. XX.*), on reaching the west of Ireland, took a south-easterly course, and, passing across the Bay of Biscay, disappeared over Spain. As it did so the South-easterly winds which prevailed in the east and north increased in force and backed round to East or North-east, temperatures decreased, and cold showers fell over Ireland and England, especially in the west. As this depression passed south-eastwards a subsidiary disturbance was developed over Holland, and, after growing deeper and moving very erratically, filled up slowly, and disappeared over France on the 11th or 12th. (See the track XXA. on Map 2 Plate VIII.) The first effect of this disturbance was to draw the wind into North over the United Kingdom, and cause it to blow strongly on our eastern coasts with cold showers, while dry weather and more moderate breezes prevailed elsewhere; but as the centre moved northwards and westwards the cold rain spread more over the kingdom, but was at no time heavy. There are some reasons for suspecting that the main disturbance subsequently moved eastwards and north-eastwards, and reappeared over the northern parts of the Adriatic early on the 9th, after which it apparently moved to north Germany and dispersed on the 11th. The information at present available, however, is scarcely sufficient to write with certainty on this point.

April 12-19.—A complete change now took place; the depression just referred to dispersed, and anticyclonic conditions were established, the new system (No. XIV.) appearing first over the north-western parts of the United Kingdom, and spreading thence over nearly the whole of north-western Europe. (See charts in the Daily and Weekly Reports for this time.) The winds gradually became North-easterly and Easterly as the centre of the system moved eastwards towards Scandinavia, and the weather was cold and dry, the nights being again very sharp. A singular complication was observed on the 15th, when a small shallow depression advanced northwards over the Bay of Biscay and Brittany to the Channel, and caused rain over all our southern counties, with thunderstorms in some localities. The fall of rain over London (nearly an inch) was very large when compared with that at the surrounding stations. The disturbance, however, soon broke up and the sky cleared. Pressure now gave way at our northern stations, and, while the anticyclone just referred to began to disperse, a new one (No. XV.) appeared off our western coasts. The wind shifted to the southward and south-westward in the north, and as the col, joining the two anticyclones, moved southwards a south-westerly current spread slowly over us, and temperature rose fast. On the 19th or 20th maxima were registered as high as 70° to 73° over England, and, the nights being cold and hazy, the diurnal range of temperature was large. Showers of rain now began to fall in the north-west and north caused by depressions moving in an east-north-easterly direction towards Norway, and the South-westerly winds above mentioned spread gradually, in a southerly direction, down our western coasts.

April 20-23.—The distribution of pressure over our Islands now became cyclonic, with moderate gradients, favourable for South-westerly winds. Angular depressions, subsidiary to the larger ones mentioned above, passed across our Islands, and showers of rain fell in most places, separated by intervals of bright sunshiny weather. Pressure then gave way decidedly in the west, and the type of distribution changed.

April 24-30.—During this closing period of the month cyclonic conditions prevailed, with a southerly type of pressure-distribution—except on the 27th. The barometer was low very generally, but while the highest readings prevailed over France, Germany, and the eastern shores of the North Sea, the lowest were found to the westward of Ireland. It was during this period that several depressions advanced in a north-north-easterly direction outside our extreme western coasts, causing strong Southerly (South-east to South-west) winds, and sometimes gales, at our western stations, while only moderate breezes were felt in the

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

southern and eastern parts of the kingdom. Temperature did not differ much from the mean, but showery weather was prevalent, with fair intervals. On the 27th a new anticyclonic system appeared in the south-west, and temporarily interfered with the conditions just referred to, but this soon passed south-eastwards to France, and was followed by a renewal of the southerly gradients, depressions, and showers, which continued till the close of the month.