

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

FEBRUARY 1898.

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General Summary.—The weather of February was extremely changeable, with frequent snow showers in most districts, and with occasional heavy falls of rain in the extreme north and north-west. Thunder and lightning occurred at times in isolated parts of the kingdom, and aurora was seen in the north-east of Scotland on the 11th and 12th. Pressure was below the average; temperature exceeded the normal in all but the most northern and north-western districts; the winds were chiefly from the Westward, with frequent gales in the west and north; rainfall was deficient, excepting in the north-west; bright sunshine was in excess of the average in most places.

Pressure.—*Mean at 8 a.m.* ranged from 30.05 ins. and upwards in the Scilly and Channel Islands, and from 30.00 ins. and upwards over the extreme south-western parts of the kingdom generally, to about 29.45 ins. in the Shetlands. In the former regions the values were above the average,* but in all other districts they were below it, the deficit being considerable in the north and north-east of Scotland. The gradient over our islands was therefore much steeper than usual, and favourable for winds from the Westward and North-westward. *Highest* readings were observed mostly on the 1st, when the barometer ranged from 30.5 ins. on our extreme south-west coasts, to 30.1 ins. or more at all but the Scotch stations. In the east and south-east of England, however, the highest readings (30.3 ins. and upwards) were recorded between the 10th and 12th, while in Scotland they occurred either on the 18th or the 24th. *Lowest* readings were observed on the 20th or 21st, when the barometer fell below 28.8 ins. in the north of Scotland, below 29.0 ins. at our northern and western stations generally, and below 29.2 ins. in all other parts of the kingdom. *Range* was moderate.

Depressions.—Several depressions appeared off our northern coasts, the centres of the larger and more important systems moving south-eastwards across Scandinavia or the eastern parts of the North Sea. Between the 20th and 23rd a well-defined system, which appeared originally off the north of Scotland, advanced in a southerly direction over our western coasts, and finally passed across the west of France, its progress being marked by heavy snowstorms in the south-west of England on the 21st, and by thunderstorms and considerable falls of rain in the south of France on the 22nd and 23rd.

Anticyclones.—On the 8th an anticyclone extended over our islands and France from the Atlantic, and afterwards became united by a "col" with a large area over northern Russia. The entire system, after moving away to the southward on the 14th, spread temporarily northwards on the 16th and 17th, but subsequently passed on to the Atlantic and apparently broke up. Another anticyclone moved steadily across our islands from the westward on the 23rd and 24th, but soon became merged in a large system of great intensity existing over Russia. At Moscow the reading of the barometer at 8 a.m. on the 25th was as high as 31.16 ins.

Winds were chiefly from the Westward, but with a tendency towards North-west on our extreme north and north-west coasts. Gales were frequent in the west and north, the number of days affected being as large as 15 at Belmullet, 13 at Aberdeen, and 11 at Ardrossan, Liverpool and Malin Head. The Westerly to North-westerly gales of the 1st-2nd and 15th-16th blew with considerable strength on our north and north-west coasts.

Temperature.—*Mean at sea level* ranged from about 47° in the Scilly Islands, and from 45° and upwards on our extreme south-west coasts generally, to 38° and less in the north of Scotland. The general distribution, though of a somewhat less wintry character than usual, differed but little from the normal, but the actual values were above the average* in all but the extreme northern and north-western parts of the kingdom, the excess amounting to two degrees or more at some of the eastern and southern stations in England. *Highest* readings were recorded mostly on the 1st, but at some of our south-western stations they occurred at various times between the 14th and 17th. In many parts of the kingdom the thermometer on the former day rose well above 55°; at Shields and Durham it reached 60°, and at Geldeston 61°. *Lowest* readings occurred between the 21st and 24th, when sharp frosts were general; at a few isolated stations in the inland parts of England the sheltered thermometer fell below 20°, while at Braemar it sank as low as 3°. *Range* was moderate as a rule, but large in a few places—at Braemar, owing to the very low reading on the 24th, it amounted to 49°. *Vapour Tension* ranged from between 0.24 in. and 0.26 in. on our extreme west and south-west coasts to 0.18 in. and less in the east of Scotland. *Relative Humidity* varied from 92 per cent. and upwards on our extreme north and north-west coasts, and 90 per cent. and upwards in the south-east of England, to 81 per cent. at Valencia and Scilly, 78 per cent. at Aberdeen and 76 per cent. at Liverpool.

Rainfall.—With a few local exceptions the rainfall was in excess of the average* over the north-western parts of the United Kingdom generally. A slight excess was reported also at some of the English Channel stations, but elsewhere there was a deficiency, the amount at many places in the eastern parts of Great Britain being less than half the normal. The largest aggregates for the month were 11.5 ins. at Glencarron, 10.7 ins. at Fort William and 9.1 ins. at Laudale; the smallest being 0.6 in. at Shields, Bawtry, Stamford and Cambridge, 0.7 in. at Leith, and 0.8 in. at Durham and Dungeness. Snow or sleet was very prevalent over the northern and eastern parts of Great Britain during the first week, and over the United Kingdom generally during the latter half of the month. As a rule the fall was in the form of slight passing showers, the chief exception occurring over the south-western parts of England on the 21st, when the snow as above mentioned, was sufficiently heavy to yield considerable quantities of water in the gauge.

Bright Sunshine was mostly in excess of the average,* but showed a slight deficiency at some of our extreme northern and north-western stations. The percentage of the possible amount ranged from 47 at Aberdeen, and 35 or more in several parts of the more northern districts, to 17 in London and 15 at Fort Augustus.

* 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.