

Weather Report

1879

Mr. MulvilleNo. 4.

Weather in Sutherland in 1879.

The weather in the north during the past year has, as in other parts of the country, been wet and cold, while the season of growth was mostly wet and unfavourable for the growth of crops. We have been on the whole better off in regard to the weather than our more southern neighbours. To begin with the winter 1878-79 it was in the north one of the most protracted winters on record. The total snowfall here, close to the sea amounted to $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet. The thermometer went down to freezing point or below it on 103 nights. The lowest point reached was on December 28th when the protected thermometer registered 18° or 14° of frost. The ground was covered with snow fully three months. Hill farmers had in most cases to send their stock to within reach of rail, and immense quantities of forage had to be brought into the county to tide the stock over the winter. Had it not been for railway communication the winter would probably have been as disastrous to stock as that of 1614 which is thus described by Sir Robert Gordon in his history of Sutherland:—"During the winter season, the year of God 1614, there fell out

"great abundance of snow, more than ordinary,
"throughout all Scotland, which stormes continued
"all the spring, even until the month of
"May next ensuing, whereby the maist part
"of all the hors, holt, and sheip of the
"Kingdome did perish bot cheiflie in the north.
There was wonderfully little damage done to
shrubs and plants last winter by frost considering
the length of time it continued. Roses suffered
most. The spring months were fairly good
after the beginning of April to the end of
May - some heavy rains occurred about the
middle and end of the latter month -
June, July, and August were excessively wet
with dull, cloudy weather, and a generally low
temperature, and to the prevalence of these
conditions, may be ascribed the lateness, and
in some parts the failure of the crops.
The rainfall for these three months was $11\frac{1}{2}$ inches
with 53 wet days, July alone contributing
 $5\frac{1}{10}$ inches with 17 wet days. Compare this with
1878, - a fairly good year. During the same
period we had $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches for the three months,
with 38 wet days, while July of that year shows
only $1\frac{2}{10}$ inches, with 10 wet days.
By the end of August things began to mend.
a spell of fine breezy weather set in, which

long looked for change for the better lasted all through September and October, and came just in time to ripen and harvest grain crops, and to materially improve the potato and turnip fields. For some garden crops the change came too late, the chief failure in the way of fruit being Strawberries. There was an appearance of an excellent crop, but only a small proportion arrived at maturity. Apples were a good crop but many of them were deficient in flavor. Plums ripened fairly well. Small fruit was plentiful and good. Gooseberries were an extraordinary crop.

The rainfall during September and October was $3\frac{3}{4}$ inches while for the same two months in 1878 it was $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches. The rainfall for the year 1879 was $29\frac{1}{10}$ inches, with 187 days on which .01 or more of rain fell, being fully 2 inches under the average of the last ten years. The Rainfall for 1878 was $33\frac{3}{10}$ inches with 180 wet days. While in 1877 (the worst year we have had here for many years, the rainfall was $40\frac{6}{10}$ inches, with 244 wet days, being 9 inches over the average.

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