



***WILLIAM  
SANGSTER***

***UMBRELLAS  
AND THEIR  
HISTORY***

**William Sangster**

# **Umbrellas and Their History**

EAN 8596547172970

DigiCat, 2022

Contact: [DigiCat@okpublishing.info](mailto:DigiCat@okpublishing.info)



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

CHAPTER II.

THE ANCIENT HISTORY OF THE UMBRELLA.

CHAPTER III.

THE UMBRELLA IN ENGLAND.

CHAPTER IV.

THE STORY OF THE PARACHUTE.

CHAPTER V.

UMBRELLA STORIES.

CHAPTER VI.

THE REGENERATION OF THE UMBRELLA.

FINIS

# CHAPTER I.

[Table of Contents](#)

## INTRODUCTORY.

[Table of Contents](#)

Can it be possibly believed, by the present eminently practical generation, that a busy people like the English, whose diversified occupations so continually expose them to the chances and changes of a proverbially fickle sky, had ever been ignorant of the blessings bestowed on them by that dearest and truest friend in need and in deed, the UMBRELLA? Can you, gentle reader, for instance, realise to yourself the idea of a man not possessing such a convenience for rainy weather?

Why so much unmerited ridicule should be poured upon the head (or handle) of the devoted Umbrella, it is hard to say. What is there comic in an Umbrella? Plain, useful, and unpretending, if any of man's inventions ever deserved sincere regard, the Umbrella is, we maintain, that invention. Only a few years back those who carried Umbrellas were held to be legitimate butts. They were old fogies, careful of their health, and so on; but now-a-days we are wiser. Everybody has his Umbrella. It is both cheaper and better made than of old; who, then, so poor he cannot afford one? To see a man going out in the rain umbrella-less excites as much mirth as ever did the sight of those who first—wiser than their generation—availed themselves of this now universal shelter. Yet still a touch of the amusing clings to the "Gamp," as it is sarcastically called. 'What says Douglas

Jerrold on the subject? "There are three things that no man but a fool lends, or, having lent, is not in the most helpless state of mental crassitude if he ever hopes to get back again. These three things, my son, are—BOOKS, UMBRELLAS, and MONEY! I believe a certain fiction of the law assumes a remedy to the borrower; but I know of no case in which any man, being sufficiently dastard to gibbet his reputation as plaintiff in such a suit, ever fairly succeeded against the wholesome prejudices of society. Umbrellas may be 'hedged about' by cobweb statutes; I will not swear it is not so; there may exist laws that make such things property; but sure I am that the hissing contempt, the loud-mouthed indignation of all civilised society, 'would sibilate and roar at the bloodless poltroon who should engage law on his side to obtain for him the restitution of a —lent Umbrella!"

Strange to say, it is a fact, melancholy enough, but for all that too true, that our forefathers, scarce seventy years ago, meekly endured the pelting of the pitiless storm without that protection vouchsafed to their descendants by a kind fate and talented inventors. The fact is, the Umbrella forms one of the numerous conveniences of life which seem indispensable to the present generation, because just so long a time has passed since their introduction, that the contrivances which, in some certain degree, previously supplied their place, have passed into oblivion.

We feel the convenience we possess, without being always aware of the gradations which intervened between it and the complete inconvenience of being continually

unsheltered from the rain, without any kind friend from whom to seek the protection so ardently desired.

Fortunately a very simple process will enable the reader to realise the fact in its full extent; he need only walk about in a pelting shower for some hours without an Umbrella, or when the weight of a cloak would be insupportable, and at the same time remember that seventy years ago a luxury he can now purchase in almost every street, was within the reach of but very few, while omnibuses and cabs were unknown.

But, apart from considerations of comfort, we may safely claim very much higher qualities as appertaining to the Umbrella. We may even reckon it among the causes that have contributed to lengthen the average of human life, and hold it a most effective agent in the great increase which took place in the population of England between the years 1750 and 1850 as compared with the previous century. The Registrar-General, in his census-report, forgot to mention this fact, but there appears to us not the slightest doubt that the introduction of the Umbrella at the latter part of the former, and commencement of the present century, must have greatly conduced to the improvement of the public health, by preserving the bearer from the various and numerous diseases superinduced by exposure to rain.

But perhaps we are a little harsh on our worthy ancestors; they may have possessed some species of protection from the rain on which they prided themselves as much as we do on our Umbrellas, and regarded the new-fangled invention (as they no doubt termed it) as something exceedingly absurd, coxcombical, and unnecessary; while