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? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed August 21, 1930.

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ABOUT UMBRELLAS

Down comes the rain and, as a matter of course, up go the umbrellas. But it was not always so.

Fame played a curious trick on Jonas Hanway. He was a great adventurer, traveler and philanthropist, and the author of some seventy books and pamphlets. Today nobody remembers the activities that made him one of the most prominent Englishmen of his time, while scores of reference books tell us that he was the first man in England to carry an umbrella. And this statement is not true.

Englishmen carried umbrellas to some extent far back in Anglo-Saxon and early Norman times. Then for centuries they were entirely disused, and when they were again introduced they were, for a long time, carried only by women. The fashion appears to have been well established by the beginning of the eighteenth century.

Hanway revived the use of umbrellas by the male sex of his own country, though at a time when men were already using them in France and Italy. His health was delicate, and, as a man of independent ideas, he did not choose to expose himself to wet weather out of deference to a mere popular prejudice. When he first appeared under an umbrella in the streets of London, about the middle of the eighteenth century, he created a great sensation. In spite of ridicule he stuck to his umbrella, and, as his biographer informs us, "after carrying one near thirty years he saw them come into general use."

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