

SENTINEL

Rise and Progress of Navigation.
River and Coast.

The various tribes of Phoenicia, though only the secondary conveyors of the merchandise of the East, rose thereby into temporary prosperity and renown. As that aggrandizing traffic vanished, their glory became as "the baseless fabric of a vision." It was chiefly to the resources accumulated from its monopoly of the Eastern trade that Tyre, single handed and unaided, resisted so long and so successfully the mightiest assaults of Alexander, the Macedonian conqueror. He described the fact with his eagle eye; and, having accomplished the conquest of Egypt, he resolved to open through that country a direct communication with India, and to replace Tyre by a nobler emporium for Eastern trade. To this the celebrated city of Alexandria owes its foundation. And when the conqueror reached the Indus, with its tributaries, and supposed, in the geographical ignorance that prevailed, that they were merely feeding streams of the Nile, his biographer, Arrian, declares that the vast fleet commanded by Nearchus was equipped for the specific purpose of opening the direct intercourse between India and Alexandria. So intent was Alexander on this favorite project that when, after weeks of extreme anxiety, he was at length relieved from all fear of the safety of his fleet, he burst into tears, and exclaimed: "By the Libyan Ammon and the Grecian Jove, I swear to thee that I am made happier by this intelligence than in being conqueror of Asia; for I should have considered the loss of my fleet, and the failure of the enterprise it has undertaken, as almost outweighing, in my mind, all the glory I have acquired!" He did not live to witness the execution of his magnificent design; but, under his immediate successors, Alexandria soon became the channel of communication between Europe and Eastern Asia. Even when it ceased to exercise sovereign power, and became politically dependent on the so-called "Mistress of the World," it still maintained its proud position as the commercial capital of the Empire; while in opulence, splendor and population it bade fair to rival, if not outrival, the Eternal City itself.

After Rome sank into decrepitude, Arabia once more sprang into greatness. They carried with them into Spain their Oriental customs and magnificence, whilst their mercantile operations extended from the Atlantic to China, and from the interior of Africa to the centre of Siberia. There, too, the Moorish princes, disregarding the austerities prescribed by the Koran, indulged in the highest degree of luxury. The productions of the East were, therefore, brought into Spain by the Arabs. The Spanish people caught the contagion of self-indulgence from their enemies, while to the same source they doubtless owed refinements which were not previously possessed. After the great victory obtained over the combined forces of the Kings of Granada and Morocco, near Tarifa, in 1340, an immense booty was found in the camp of the conquered. Not only were silks, cloth of gold and precious stones divided by the victors, but so great was the quantity of gold and silver, both coined and in ingots, that the value of those metals is said to have fallen one sixth, in consequence, throughout the kingdoms of France and Spain. The retention of the sumptuous habits of the East by the Moors is thus fully manifest. Nor were they alone in this respect. In the same period the Spaniards acquired a taste for all that was rare in the Oriental world. The streets of Seville were hung with silk and cloth, and costly perfumes were burned in the houses, when they were passed through by Alfonso XI. in 1334.

There is reason to believe that the various commodities of Eastern luxury were brought into Spain chiefly by the Moors, and that the supply of them was diminished as this people and the Spaniards became more hostile and embittered. The ultimate expulsion of the Moors from Spain was therefore one motive for seeking a new course by the ocean to India. But the Portuguese were the first to expel the Moors from their dominions, and even to pursue them to distant shores; and hence they are the first to claim our attention as entering vigorously on maritime discovery. John I., of Portugal, married the eldest daughter of John of Gaunt, by whom he had several sons, of whom Don Henry was the fifth. After serving with great bravery under his father at the capture of Ceuta, he acquired much information from the Moors in reference to the seas and coasts of Western Africa, which raised and encouraged the project of maritime discoveries; and these became afterwards the almost exclusive pursuit of his active mind. He also obtained intelligence respecting the nomadic tribes which occupy the Great Desert.

Three years before the reduction of Ceuta, the Duke of Viseo had sent a vessel to explore the western coast of Africa, being the first voyage of discovery undertaken by the Portuguese, or by any other nation in modern times. The commander was directed to follow the western coast of Africa as far as the foot of Mount Atlas, which had hitherto been regarded as the non plus ultra of European navigation. The success which attended this voyage is not recorded; but Don Henry continued to dispatch vessels to the same coast every year. Not daring to trust himself beyond the sight of land, the mariners crept timorously along the coast, and at length reached Cape Bojador one hundred and eighty miles beyond Cape Non, which is an extension of the foot of Mount Atlas. Cape Bojador stretches boldly out into the ocean, while the shoals by which it is surrounded, for the

space of eighteen miles, and which are perpetually beaten by a heavy surge, filled the Portuguese mariners with amazement and terror; and they dared not stretch out into the open sea in quest of smoother water, lest, losing sight of land altogether, they might perish. It is thought by some that the cape was regarded by them as a barrier, to warn them not to attempt to pass to the burning soil and scorching vapors which tradition depicted to characterize the torrid zone. They accordingly measured back their weary steps to Portugal, where they narrated their proceedings to Don Henry, in which they doubtless did not make the least of the fearful dangers which they had encountered.

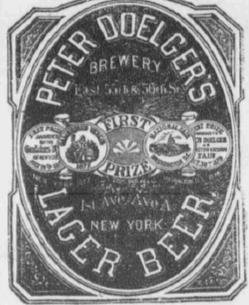
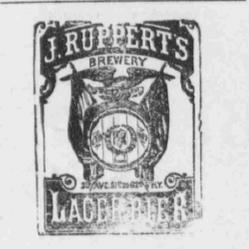
The Umbrella.

Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper.

In the dim and distant past the umbrella, or sunshade, made its first appearance. But so extreme is its antiquity that to attempt even to give an approximate date of its earliest advent is impossible. In the sculptures of ancient Egypt the umbrella is constantly depicted. In its earliest form it was made of palm leaves or feathers fixed on a long handle, and in the beginning of its career it was used only as a shade from the sun and never as a protection against rain. This is more easily understood when it is remembered that its birthplace was in hot, brilliant climates, where it rarely rains. In Eastern countries the umbrella was, and still very frequently is, one of the most prized insignia of royalty and power. In ancient India, the cradle of the human race, the umbrella reached the climax of its splendor. There it was a recognized symbol of royal majesty, and betokened the power of life and death. In Hindostan the parasol of seven stages is the first ensign of royalty. It is graven on the royal seal. It has also a sacred signification. In his fifth incarnation Vishnu is represented as descending to Hades with a parasol in his hand. Sita, speaking of Rama, bemoans, that she cannot see those beautiful eyes which resemble a lotus because they are "covered with a parasol striped with a hundred rays." The Maharratta princes who reigned in Poonah and Sa tarah held the title of "Lord of the Parasol." And one of the highest titles of the monarch of the Kingdom of Ava was "King of the White Elephant and Lord of the Four-and-Twenty Parasols." In the East ancient customs die hard, and in 1877, when the Prince of Wales paid his visit of world wide renown to India, Dr. W. H. Russell writes that "in order to make the Prince known to the natives it was absolutely necessary to set him upon an elephant and to hold over his head the golden sunshade—symbol of his sovereignty." Persons of rank in the Maharratta Court, whose birth did not entitle them to carry an umbrella, used a screen, a flat vertical disc, which greatly resembled in form the early sunshade, and this was always carried by an attendant. It is interesting to note that the Marquis of Dalhousie, in 1855, received a letter from the King of Burmah, in which he styles himself "His great, glorious and most excellent Majesty, who reigns over the Kingdoms of Thunaparanta, Tampadipa, and all the great Umbrella-wearing chiefs of the Eastern countries," &c.

From the very limited use of the umbrella or sunshade in Asia and Africa it seems to have passed both as a distinction and a luxury into Greece and Rome. The "day-shade," to give as literal a translation as possible of the Greek word, was an indispensable adjunct of the toilet of a lady of fashion. And to mark their inferiority the daughters of the aliens at Athens were made to carry sunshades over the heads of the noble maidens at the festival of the Panathena. In Rome the fashion of carrying sunshades was not confined only to women. At the theatres effeminate men—as well as women—used to shelter themselves from the sun under sunshades; for only when it rained was the veil or curtain drawn. In England umbrellas were not unknown in the seventeenth century. That they were rare then is sufficiently testified by the following curious passage quoted from Coryat's "Cruities," published in 1611. After speaking about fans, he goes on to say, "And many of them doe carry other fine things of a far greater price, that will cost at least a ducquet, which they commonly call in the Italian tongue 'umbrellae'; that is things which minister shadow unto them for shelter against the scorching heate of the sunne. These are made of leather, something answerable to the forme of a little canopy, and hooped in the inside with divers little wooden hoops that extend the umbrella into a pretty large compasse. They are used especially by horsemen, who carry them in their hands when they ride, lastening the end of the handle upon one of their thighs, and they impart so large a shade unto them that it keepeth the heate of the sunne from the upper parts of their bodies." It is probable that a similar contrivance existed, at this same period, in Spain and Portugal, and from there was carried to the New World.

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