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Roll of thunder! There is a very noticeable difference between the sharp crack of thunder and the roll or rumbling of thunder, both of which are frequently heard. Thunder is due to a compressional air wave sent out from all points of the lightning's path. When lightning is nearby the sound comes direct as a sharp crack. But when the lightning's path is far away, it takes appreciably longer for the sound to come from farther than the nearer points of the path, since sound travels only about 1,000 feet a second, and so the sound comes as a succession of noises, making a roll. The little individual cracks are much softened by many reflections before they reach the ear of the observer.
