

## ***NOISE***

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If you are awake in the very early morning, when all the family is in bed, even a small sound, like that of a rat in the wall or a fly on the window, seems loud. And if you give a cough or a sneeze, or a board in the floor makes a noise when you put your foot on it, the sudden sound goes through the house like thunder. That is because all the house is quiet, and every sound comes clearly to your ears. In the day some noise is in the air all the time, and separate sounds are clear only if we give them our attention.

In the country every sound is clearer than in the town because the noise is less. The voice of a man, and even what is said, may be sent to your ears across a field. And the sound of a cow-bell, or of the feet of a horse on the road, may come from the other end of the farm.

But that is only in quiet weather. The noise of thunder keeps all other sounds from your hearing. And sometimes, in a wind, even if a person is near you, not one word of what he says comes to your ears.

In the country after the sun goes down the fields are very quiet. Sometimes the voice of a night-bird comes from the trees, or the dog at the farm makes a noise when any person goes near the house, but at other times the only sounds are those which are made by the wind in the leaves or the rain on the grass.

But in some parts of the town our ears have no rest from the start of the day till a late hour in the night. Most of the noises in the town are bad, but some are worse than others. One of the worst is music outside in the streets. It takes our attention off our work, and if we are ill it may make us tired.

One noise which comes to our ears all the day in the town is that made by the feet of men and women in the street. The streets are quiet only after a fall of snow, when the snow makes a soft cover over the hard road.

A man makes a sound every time he takes a step, even when he has no shoes on. Most animals are quieter than men, but the quietest animal is a cat. The soft feet of a cat go over even the hardest floor and make no sound, and if the animal is not seen, it may go anywhere and no attention will be given to it.

Men are the only animals which make music, though the sounds made by a bird may seem very like a song. Songs are the music which men make with their voices.