

traffic during the warm season, and would seek to establish a correlation between higher temperatures and increased traffic. It would be extremely unlikely that he would hit upon the true explanation, for he would have no means of access to the relevant data.

After ten years of observing this steady succession of ships the whale might feel that a period of approximately 500 weeks during which almost the same schedules were maintained, except for a regular increase repeated each summer, gave solid reason for declaring it to be a fact that this regular procedure had occurred year by year during the previous two thousand years, and would probably continue unchanged during the next two thousand.

In the fall of 1914 the whale's calculations would be upset by seeing schedules suddenly become completely chaotic, a condition that would continue for several years. Great numbers of ships would come in large groups at varying intervals of time. All the wisdom gained in the five hundred previous weeks would now be useless. The whale would not have been aware of the outbreak of World War I, and would have no access to the data through which he could learn about it. He might think of many ingenious explanations for the sudden disruption of the whole beautiful system, but it is very unlikely that any one of his theories would be at all similar to what had really happened.

#### PERIODIC DISRUPTIONS

By 1920 the former schedule would have been reestablished with little alteration, except for something of an increase, and this would continue for another eighteen years. By this time the whale would be quite certain that, regardless of the cause of the temporary aberration between 1914 and 1920, a solid basis was now established for listing the regular crossing of passenger ships in the previous 2000 years and forecasting those of the next 2000 years. Another chaotic period would begin toward the end of 1938 at about the same time of the year as the previous disruption that had