

THE OCEAN OF LIFE

By Bertie Wood

The ocean of life is made up of individual waves of human character.

Many of these are born, flow among the others, and disappear
without ever reaching that point of contact with the shore
that demonstrates their individuality.

Among those that do come rolling in to shore, there are three major types,
depending on the circumstances of their arrival.

The first meets a cliff of stone,
makes a crashing boom which, while it sounds like other crashing booms,
is uniquely its own
and is gone forever.

The second meets a sandy beach
and flows full shapely out across the shore,
a perfect wave which disappears fulfilled,
as character can be in time of peace, support, and reasonable comfort.

The third flows in upon a shore of sand
with scattered rocks or tide pools to disrupt its way.
This, perhaps, is most of humankind,
spending that potential perfection of its character against unconquerable stone
but rippling on,
to gain the shore in mixed array with others,
also spent and undistinguishable.
One day, these waves will wear away the stones,
to leave a beach so smoothly welcoming
that younger waves may finish out their lives with character intact.