form in late-19th-century Britain came just in time to give him both opportunity and an audience. Wells was born into the lower layer of the lower middle class. He knew insecurity and poverty and, in youth, a succession of disastrous apprenticeships. He was almost literally saved by science when, with the aid of a sympathetic headmaster, he won a scholarship at the age of 18 to the South Kensington Normal School of Science, which was to become the Royal College.

In his first year there he studied biology under Thomas Henry Huxley. The Darwinian revolution was still new, and Wells's experience as an exemplary student of biology no doubt sharpened the "barricades" spirit he was never to lose. He was less interested in the physics and geology he studied in his second and third years, and socialism, which he discovered in London, proved a powerful distraction. He failed his third-year examinations, and, although he later did earn his B.Sc., the failure blasted his ambitions to become a research scientist.

For a time he taught school and turned his hand to journalism on scientific subjects. He gradually established himself, and publication of *The Time Machine* in 1895 solved the problem of a career. In the years before World War I he produced a succession of scientific romances and an equally popular series of novels, such as *Kipps: The Story of a Simple Soul, The History of Mr. Polly,* and *Tono-Bungay,* which were realistic comedies based on Wells's early experience. His explorations of lower-middle-class life were then as novel in British literature as his science-based fantasies about the future, and his ultimate reputation as a writer probably rests on the work of this period.

In these same years Wells developed his ideas of a world state and of society organized along rational and scientific lines which came to be known as "Wellsian," although the adjective was also often applied to Sunday-supplement visions of man-made marvels of the future. He was also an active if heterodox socialist in those days, and his views on conventional attitudes, in particular, sexual mores, and his behavior earned him a degree of notoriety.

World War I shook Wells to the roots of his assumptions. He reacted by returning to views on patriotism and to religious beliefs which were very close to conventional, and which he later recanted. Self-contradiction, however, seems never to have worried Wells. He was a supreme individualist, who, nevertheless, believed in an engineered society in which individualism might well prove an embarrassment; he was, by and large, an optimist about the prospects for humanity, but he did not hold the view, which often accompanies this optimism, that man is naturally good; he was a republican and an egalitarian, but put great store on the titles and trappings of academic scholarship.

After World War I Wells devoted himself increasingly to large-scale collaborative efforts such as the writing of the *Outline of History* and *Science of Man*, and the didactic strain in his novels became more pronounced. He was acting, as always, on his belief that "civilization is a race between education and catastrophe."

In the last two decades of his life his remarkable energies and his influence declined. He was a difficult man in many ways, and his business affairs and personal relationships suffered. But he by no means sank into passivity. He went on writing, and he kept open his lines of communication with scientists, as he had throughout his career, through friendships with men like Sir Richard Gregory, for 20 years the editor of *Nature*.

Although neither unrecognized nor unappreciated in his later years [he was awarded the degree of D. Litt. by London University in the middle 1930's and was elected president of section L (Educational Sciences) by the British Association for the Advancement of Science later in the decade], he felt, with a kind of morbid disappointment, that he had never been fully accepted by scientists as one of themselves. As Lord Snow pointed out in a centenary lecture on Wells at Imperial College in November, Wells's wish for membership in the Royal Society became very nearly an obsession. To make himself more acceptable he even submitted a thesis for a doctor of science degree to London University when he was well into his seventies.

Wells never got his F.R.S., which is a pity, since he apparently had little interest in literary immortality, a measure of which he has certainly earned. He was one of the leaders of the assault on orthodox 19th-century economic, moral, and religious beliefs. Snow said that Churchill called Wells "a seer." He taught his own generation and following ones to think in new ways about the future. Implicit in his work for the reader today is the advice in a changing world to adopt an attitude of constructive pessimism.

Although he knew that scientists were fallible, it was one of those Wellsian contradictions that his properly ordered society really needed a scientist with a touch of the superman to run it. It was perhaps because of this faith in the scientist that he urged scientists to take a more direct role in the conduct of human affairs.

At the same time he understood the scientist's impulse to withdraw into his work. This impulse and some of Wells's own feelings as a disappointed scientist are reflected in the final passage from an early work, *The Island of Doctor Moreau.* The narrator has returned from harrowing adventures on an island where a gifted research scientist has overreached himself with experiments aimed at nothing less than turning beasts into humans. "I see few strangers, and have but a small household. My days I devote to reading and to experiments in chemistry, and I spend many of the clear nights in the study of astronomy. There is, though I do not know how there is or why there is, a sense of infinite peace and protection in the glittering hosts of heaven. There it must be, I think, in the vast and eternal laws of matter, and not in the daily cares and sins and troubles of men, that whatever is more than animal within us must find its solace and its hope. I hope, or I could not live. And so, in hope and solitude, my story ends."

—JOHN WALSH

Heart Research Program

The National Heart Institute of NIH is initiating a novel extramural research program in the field of myocardial infarction. The program will support the development and operation of a small number of Myocardial Infarction Study Centers for clinical investigation of patients and supporting laboratory research. The centers will be located at hospitals or related institutions which have facilities for both research and patient care.

Interested institutions are urged to begin planning immediately. The Heart Institute will hold a meeting of potential applicants in early February, and will offer staff support in the preparation of applications. Further information may be obtained from Stuart Bonderant, M.D., Room 5A-24, Building 31, NIH, Bethesda, Maryland.