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Jean Oswald attended Carthage College, Kenosha, Wisconsin, on a scholarship, then worked as a commercial artist in California. In 1971, she graduated from the University of Wisconsin with a degree in Education.

Presently, Jean Oswald teaches in the Milwaukee Public School System and also works as a free-lance artist and writer. *Yours for Health: The Life and Times of Herbert M. Shelton* is her third book. She is married and has one daughter.



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“Oswald has utilized the made-for-a-movie drama of Herbert Shelton's life to bring every reader an emotionally enriching, inspirational experience.”

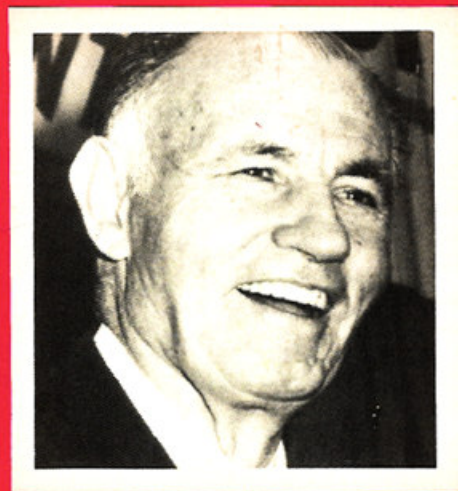
From the foreword by ROBERT S. MENDELSON, M.D.

# Yours for Health

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF  
**HERBERT M. SHELTON**  
AMERICA'S HEALTH MESSIAH  
AUTHOR OF FORTY BOOKS

“A man of astounding intelligence and understanding, Dr. Herbert Shelton was the greatest health oracle of the 20th century.”

—HARVEY AND MARILYN DIAMOND  
Bestselling authors of FIT FOR LIFE



BY JEAN A. OSWALD

**"OSWALD'S ACCURATE AND ENGROSSING ACCOUNT OF A TOWERING FORCE in the history of the world's search for health will be an invaluable influence on the lives of those who read it as well as a welcome biographical study of one respected and admired by so many whose lives were so profoundly touched by him."**

**DR. WILLIAM L. ESSER, Professional Hygienist,  
Lake Worth, Florida**

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**"THIS BOOK REVEALS FOR THE FIRST TIME the actual story of my husband's arrests, our struggles, and how he was persecuted."**

**IDA J. PAPE SHELTON  
Alamo Heights, Texas**

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**". . . A TRUE STORY ABOUT COURAGE AND ADVERSITY written by an author who knew Dr. Shelton well."**

**DR. GERALD BENESH, Professional Hygienist,  
Escondido, California**

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**". . . A CLASSIC IN HYGIENIC LITERATURE."**

**DR. KEKI R. SIDHWA, Professional Hygienist  
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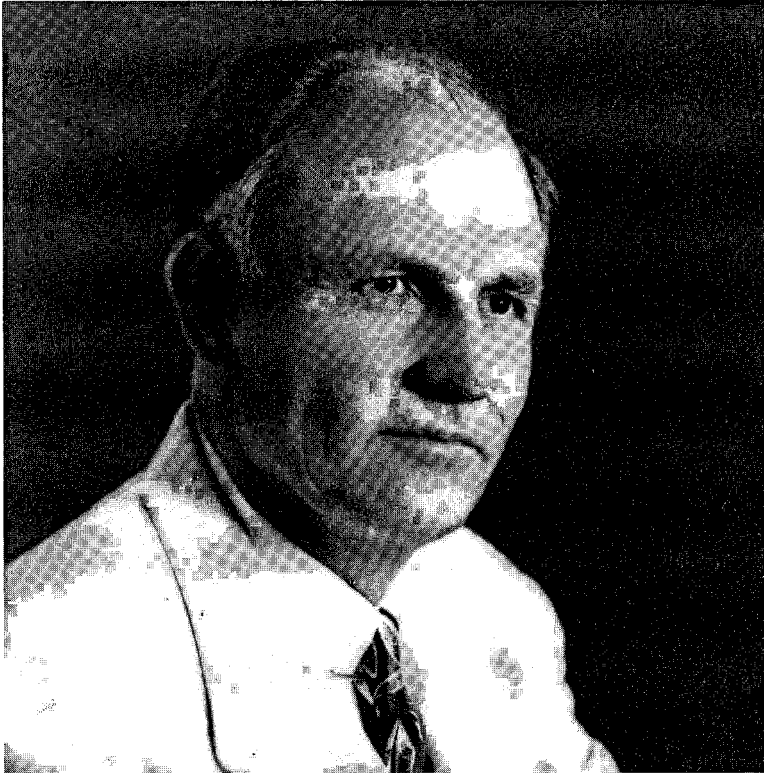
**"I AM SURE POSTERITY WILL RECOGNIZE HERBERT SHELTON AS ONE OF THE GREAT THINKERS OF ALL TIMES. He has left a legacy of thought and work that can be the key to humankind salvation from disease and suffering."**

**T.C. FRY, President, Life Science Institute  
Austin, Texas**

# *Yours for Health*

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF  
**HERBERT M. SHELTON**

BY JEAN A. OSWALD



*Yours for Health,  
Herbert M. Shelton*

**FRANKLIN BOOKS**

*It is not the intent of the author to diagnose, prescribe or to give medical or hygienic advice. The reader should consult a physician or doctor in matters relating to his or her health and particularly in respect to any symptoms that may be present. Be sure to discuss with your doctor your specific health problems before undertaking new dietary habits.*

*All circumstances are true, but the specific identities of the fasters and those individuals involved in the court cases have been fictionalized to retain their privacy.*

*All photographs are from the Shelton family and the American  
Natural Hygiene Society  
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First Printing, February 1989*

**SHOULD YOU HAVE DIFFICULTY OBTAINING ADDITIONAL COPIES OF THIS BOOK, YOU MAY WRITE DIRECTLY TO THE PUBLISHER.**

*Simply send retail price plus \$1.50 postage and handling. Fasting for the Health of It is also available (\$9.95 plus \$1.50 postage and handling). Send check or money order to: FRANKLIN BOOKS, 11815 WEST SOMERSET DRIVE, FRANKLIN, WISCONSIN 53132.*

To Justine, Jim, Dores and Roger

*with love*

**Note:** The author recommends that a fast such as Dr. Shelton introduces to the public should not be taken without professional supervision. Neither author nor publisher accepts responsibility for anyone so doing. The use of drugs during a fast is highly dangerous and must be precisely regulated by an expert. Lengthy fasting is not recommended for those afflicted with diabetes, tuberculosis, or certain other advanced and debilitating diseases. Fasting during pregnancy and lactation should be avoided. Close supervision is strongly advised throughout the fast. Competent expertise is also necessary when breaking the fast, together with proper care during the post-adjustment period.

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*The regimen I adopt shall be for the benefit of my patients according to my ability and judgment, and not for their hurt or for any wrong.*

HIPPOCRATIC OATH

## FOREWORD

Without a clear understanding of history, great informational gaps endanger our accurate evaluation of the current scene and threaten our ability to rationally plan future action strategies. The history of the health movement is no exception.

The chaos and controversy that characterizes today’s approaches to both the theoretical foundations of health and the practical methods of achieving, maintaining and re-gaining health has significant roots that demand clarification and public visibility.

The major therapeutic movements that directly affect human health and life have, for over a century, been on collision course. This dualistic duel carries a variety of titles:

- health promotion vs. disease management
- alternative vs. orthodox practitioners
- nutritional vs. technological approaches
- healers vs. doctors
- self-care vs. intervention
- wholistic vs. segmental medicine
- traditional folk medicine vs. modern medicine and, more perjoratively:
- scientific medicine vs. quackery
- holistic medicine vs. dehumanization



Each movement has its own heroes. The Pantheon of medicine includes Pasteur, Lister, Banting and Best, Fleming, Sabin, and Salk. The analogous Hall of Fame of alternative healers includes Hahnemann, Semmelweiss, Macfadden, Davis, Palmer, Pauling, Dick-Read—and Herbert Shelton.

Hostility between the two camps escalates with the passing decades. Modern Medicine's M.D.'s call their counterparts "quacks" even though the Office of Technology Assessment of the U.S. Congress has officially stated that 80-90% of all modern medical treatments have never been subjected to the controlled studies necessary to scientifically prove efficacy and safety.

Alternative "healers" (a word that modern physicians shun—and rightfully so, since they perceive their job to be "treating" regardless of whether or not healing takes place) respond with the statistics showing that in every MD strike, nationally and internationally, when modern physicians stop working, the mortality rates drop—sometimes by as much as 50%—only to return to "normal" levels when physicians return to their prescription pads and scalpels.

The war is not limited to words alone as M.D.'s, in control of the law, imprison their enemies; as midwives deprived of legal legitimacy are forced to work underground; as M.D.—backed "dieticians" seek through legislative fiat to eliminate nutritional practitioners other than themselves.

Furthermore, as citizens become increasingly disillusioned with the break-through/break-down cycle of modern medicine's "miracles," they increasingly look to its alternative methods—away from the modern (chemical, surgical, irradiation, vaccines, ultrasound) and instead to the use of the historical "regimen" prescribed by Hippocrates (food, exercise, lifestyle), to the traditional healing arts of acupuncture, homeopathy, chiropractic, and at least a dozen others.

The dilemmas engendered by this deadly battle threaten all patients. In presenting to us the life story of Dr. Herbert Shelton, Jean Oswald has taken a giant step in converting confusion into clarity. Shelton's life—accurately and authoritatively documented—serves as a role model for all health educators, present and future.

I am personally interested in this drugless physician since he received his Doctorate in Physiologic Therapeutics in Chicago, six years before I was born in that same city. According to Modern Medicine, Shelton had been born wrong—to a teenage (eighteen-year-old) mother. And, despite coming two months premature,

weighing less than three pounds, he survived (having pre-dated modern high-tech infant intensive care units) by being kept warm in a wooden cigar box next to the iron stove in a run-down farmhouse.

Mark Twain, when asked where he received his education, responded: "Throughout my entire life, except for the years I attended school." Twain would have been delighted with Shelton who learned his fasting strategy, not by laboratory experimentation on animals, but by observation of the benefits of abstaining from food in his father's own farm animals. Shelton was influenced in his early years, as was I, by historical religious figures who fasted—Moses, Elijah, Jesus—and more recently by Upton Sinclair.

Early on, he attacked the surgical treatment of appendicitis—as did Cleveland Clinic's renowned surgeon, George Crile, Jr., M.D, decades later, in 1945. Shelton successfully substituted fasting and rest for appendectomy.

In 1949, he was elected first president of an organization (one of my favorites) destined for historic prominence—the American Natural Hygiene Society which paved the way for the development of other national and international Natural Hygiene organizations. His many books serve as a valuable vehicle for transmitting his ideas, and primarily his emphasis on self-care—condemning the doctor-patient relationship regardless of type of doctor—to generations to come.

Even though I never had the privilege of personally meeting Dr. Shelton, I did have the opportunity, in 1982, to appear in his defense as an expert witness in legal action brought against him and his colleague, Dr. Vivian Virginia Vetrano.

The major controversies that surrounded Herbert Shelton remain unresolved today. Was Pasteur correct in arguing that germs cause disease—or does truth lie with his critic Bechamp, another famous French chemist, who argues that germs invade the body only after the tissues had already been destroyed. Was Koch right in his germ theory of disease—or does truth lie with Virchow, the Polish pathologist, who argued that disease is a product not of microbes, but rather of wretched socio-economic conditions. Was Darwin right in his theory of evolution—or does truth lie with Velikovsky, the french astronomer-physician who argued for the fairly recent catastrophic theory of humankind's origin. (The great advantage of theories over facts is that the latter may be disproven, but a theory can never be proven or disproven.)

For bringing to public attention Shelton's theoretical/historical/anthropological/political justification for supervised fasting,

Jean Oswald deserves great credit. But, beyond this stimulating intellectual contribution, writer Oswald (she was also Dr. Shelton's co-author) has utilized the made-for-a-movie drama of Herbert Shelton's life to bring every reader an emotionally enriching, inspirational experience.

When Jean Oswald in 1981 kindly sent Dr. Shelton a tape of one of my lectures, he responded, "If I were not still living, I would think he is a reincarnation of me." Should anyone be surprised at my feeling of honor at having been chosen to write this foreword!

Robert S. Mendelsohn, M.D.  
 Author, *Confessions of a Medical Heretic*,  
*Male Practice* and *How to Raise a*  
*Healthy Child* . . .

*Evanston, Illinois*  
*February 1988*

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My deepest gratitude is extended to the late Dr. Herbert M. Shelton who for four years offered facts pertaining to his life. He generously gave to me access to his personal correspondence and gave to me permission to quote from any published or unpublished material. He was my inspiration for producing this book.

My husband, Jim Oswald, played an important part for patiently providing the ideal atmosphere for concentration and was instrumental in giving encouragement and advice throughout the project.

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Warm appreciation is extended to the patient Kathy Grusczyński for her expertise to help make this book a reality.

And finally, my utmost gratitude is extended to the late Robert S. Mendelsohn, M.D., for writing the foreword to this book. Dr. Mendelsohn died on April 5, 1988, too soon to see his foreword in print. Dr. Mendelsohn was one of the most influential physicians of modern day medicine. Largely because of his influence, the United States Food and Drug Administration has removed some 3,000 ineffective and dangerous drugs from the market.

Dr. Mendelsohn is deeply missed by his family, friends, patients, dedicated medical disciples and by his readers and media followers. May the profound work on his books and countless articles that he wrote in his lifetime continue to reach many people in the years to come. His memory is a blessing to the world.

Jean A. Oswald

*Nature never became a toy to a wise spirit.*

RALPH WALDO EMERSON  
*Nature: Addresses, and Lectures*

## PROLOGUE

### 1

#### A CAFE IN SAN ANTONIO

From Dr. Shelton's home in Alamo Heights, Texas, I drove seventeen miles on the Johnson City Highway and then continued on the winding, hilly road that led to his former health school. It was one of those hot, southern Texas afternoons in 1984. After parking the rented car at a roadside grocery store and cafe in San Antonio, I sat at a table drinking Angreir — a bottled water. Idly, I watched a middle-aged cowboy lift, jar and bang a pinball machine while four Texans played a game of pool.

When one of the pool players set aside his cue with a final, "Have to get back to my truckin'," his partner, a tall cowboy turned to me: "My pool partner left. Will you shoot some pool?"

"Well, I . . ."

"Come on. We'll beat these guys."

"Five bucks you can't!" said one of the opponents, slamming a five-dollar bill on top the pool table.

I was uncomfortable, but I played the game.

"You're new in town?" my partner asked.

"I'm from Milwaukee. I came to visit a friend who now lives in Alamo Heights. But he used to live in San Antonio in the building on the hill just west of here."

"Over there on the hill? It closed down in 1981," remarked the pinball player, whom I was standing next to.

"I know it's closed." I nodded sadly.

Then all the men looked at each other and laughed.

"What's so funny?" I asked.

"That's the 'Crazy House' . . . The quack ran it!"

"I saw his picture in the newspaper. He was arrested for practicing

medicine without a license," my partner added.

From another direction I heard, "People used to starve at the 'Crazy House' . . . go and commit suicide there . . . jump out of windows right on the premises. Some people think there's dead bodies buried under the building. You know, those that starved to death."

I did not comment immediately. After nervously flubbing my shot, I tried to explain. "It was a *health school* where people would fast, not *starve*. Dr. Herbert Shelton owned the Health School. I've heard more people call Shelton a genius than a quack."

"Here in San Antonio he's the quack," my partner insisted.

In an attempt to defend Shelton I added, "Maybe that's how some people view him, but internationally Shelton was praised by Mahatma Gandhi. Shelton's work on fasting was read by Gandhi before and during his famous political fasts.<sup>1</sup> In fact, in 1942 Gandhi invited Shelton to study with him in India."

"I was not aware of the connection between Gandhi and Shelton," my partner responded as he expertly put four solid balls in the pockets. Then he said, "The School is up for sale. I know a person who wanted to buy it but couldn't because the building is tied up in some lawsuit."

I replied, "The opposing lawyers in the lawsuit stopped all sales on the property. Now the suit is over and it's up for sale again."

"The building is deteriorating and going down in value. I don't know who'll buy it now," my partner commented. "I heard Shelton's bankrupt. Is that true?"

"Yes," I answered. He lost the suit and his school. I intend to drive up to the School to see what shape it's in."

With some excitement in his tone of voice, my partner warned me, "Don't get out of your car! Lock your car doors when you look at the crazy health school. It's dangerous up there. That's no place for you!"

"Okay, I understand," I answered as I banked a solid ball that accidentally sped into a corner pocket. My partner got the eight ball in on our next turn, picked up the money, and asked, "Will you play another game?"

"No, I can't. I'm going to the School and then I have a flight to catch back to Milwaukee."

"Right now you're leaving?"

"Yes. I have work to do."

"Work?"

"Well . . . I have a story to write." My tongue tied, unable to spill out the words "about Herbert Shelton." I thanked them for the game and said good-bye. As soon as I got in the car, I reached over and locked the doors.

## 2

### THE VACANT HEALTH SCHOOL

I parked the car in front of Dr. Shelton's Health School. The two-story brick school, I knew, was situated on top a hill dubbed by Dr. Shelton "Mount Hygeia" after the Greek Goddess of Health. The Health School had once been an international center from which had come the seminal message of "health by healthful living." I recalled the School's appearance in 1980 when I first visited Dr. Shelton at his school. Red and pink geraniums had filled and draped over the sides of the four white urns that flanked the entrance. Now the greying, chipped urns contain dead leaves. Not a stalk remains standing upright.

As I looked from "Mount Hygeia" to the San Antonio valley, I mused over former days when more than twenty thousand people from all over the world had fasted here, while countless others had regained their health after reading Shelton's numerous books and articles on a system of health called Natural Hygiene. Dr. Shelton was at the forefront of the twentieth century worldwide hygienic movement. Throughout his life he fought to keep the hygienic system pure. He strove to keep the principles of Hygiene separate from all other modes of care, namely medicine, chiropractic, naturopathy and osteopathy.

I maneuvered the car so that I could see directly through the School's glass doorway. At one time a chandelier had illuminated the white tiled foyer. Two handsome oil paintings, one of Dr. Shelton at age fifty-four and one of his mentor, Dr. Issac Jennings, M.D., at seventy, used to hang opposite one another. But now the chandelier had been stolen, the two portraits were stored and a ragged old mop leaned against a bare wall.

I looked at the broken window in Dr. Shelton's office located to the left of the entrance. It was in this office that he had held many conferences. Six of his more than forty books were written here.

<sup>1</sup> Keki R. Sidhwa. "Two Fighters for Freedom--Mahatma Gandhi and Herbert Shelton." *Journal of the British Natural Hygiene Society* 95 (1983): 8.

Scanning the entire front of the building, I noticed every window in the twenty front guest rooms was broken.

Feeling melancholy, I leaned against the head rest in the car and remembered the time when I had asked Dr. Shelton for permission to write a book about his life. He had replied, "There is nothing particularly interesting about my life to write about. I can think of more important work to be done."

I believed Dr. Shelton was being too modest because his life had affected many thousands of people. I felt compelled to document his life's work. He represented health care freedom and championed the sacred and inviolate rights of the individual to care for his or her body in the manner that one chooses. Dr. Shelton and, later, his followers were of the few who had stood up to the American Medical Association. They had confronted the individual with an awareness of healthful living as opposed to the views and practices of modern medicine and big business.

Think of all the books and articles you wrote and all your accomplishments," I said. *Food Combining Made Easy* has been translated into eight languages.<sup>1</sup> And *Fasting Can Save Your Life* sold over one million copies. In fact I'll bet you wrote more words than Ben Franklin, Ralph Emerson, Henry Thoreau or Mark Twain."

To my enthusiastic praise and repeated request, his response was, "If you decide to publish a book about me you may find yourself in a position similar to the one in which Thoreau found himself. When asked by a friend how many books he had in his library, he replied, 'Seven hundred, all mine.'"<sup>2</sup>

I persisted, reminding him, "You have helped me recover from asthma. No doubt I would not have fasted twenty-eight days had I not read your work on toxemia. Other people have told me that your writings have helped them recover their health. Some have said they are still alive because of you. If a person benefits the lives of so many people, then I believe that person is very great. You, have this extraordinary greatness."

"I know you well from documenting case histories together," he replied. "You are my good friend. You of all people should write my life's story."

Elated, I smiled now as I recalled how I had gained his permission. I then drove to the solarium where Dr. Shelton's guests had sunbathed and had been encouraged to enjoy plenty of fresh air. I

smiled again when I remembered the nurse telling me that private aircraft would sometimes hover over the often nude sunbathers in the solarium. My smile turned to a pensive frown when, as I looked from the car, my gaze rested upon an aperture in the solarium's five-foot-high brick wall. Odd pieces of weathered lumber and fallen brick lay in the tall grass. Wood benches that had once supported flowered mattresses now lay tilted, broken, rotted.

Across from the brick wall was the corner room where Dr. Shelton had lived. It was here that I had first worked with Dr. Shelton. The master teacher had taught me how to combine foods hygienically. He helped me to understand the unity of disease, the theory on toxemia, and other basic principles of Natural Hygiene. I also learned from him to be leery of commercial enterprises and profiteers. I knew how much he detested big business. The money game never caught his interest. I remembered when he had said to me, "I am more interested in knowledge than in money; and I am only interested in those things which produce something for the common benefit of the human race."

Later, I had asked him why he did not copyright any of his self-published books. He had answered, "I am most concerned with sharing knowledge and truths. I am glad for the opportunity to serve others." Subsequently, I learned he had given foreign publishers permission to reprint his work at any time, gratis.<sup>3</sup>

After carefully looking about, I got out of the car and walked to the corner room where Dr. Shelton had told me these things. I peered through the window of the fourteen by sixteen foot empty room and saw where bullet holes had been shot through the door. Two bare wires hung where the ceiling light fixture had been. A broken cardboard box lay on the floor next to a worn, soiled mattress. Wood had been pried from the walls, and, evidently, burned to provide heat in the winter for wanderers, the homeless, derelicts, who decided to spend a night or longer in the vacant building. Behind and above the mattress, rusted water stains ran down the wall where his pecan desk once stood. I recalled how I had enjoyed sitting by his old desk while we discussed the miraculous recoveries he had witnessed during his sixty years experience in supervising fasts. I remembered his dark book case with glass doors and books arranged in rows, two and three deep. Folders containing articles were stacked in all corners of his room. More were on top of,

<sup>1</sup> *Food Combining Made Easy* has been translated into Spanish, Italian, Dutch, French, Swedish, Portugese, Greek and Hindi.

<sup>2</sup> Correspondence between Dr. Herbert Shelton and Jean Oswald, 8 February 1981.

<sup>3</sup> Discussion with Dr. Herbert Shelton and Willowdeen Shelton Rossner, Alamo Heights, Texas, 26 June 1981.

next to, and under his desk. "It's organized chaos," he once remarked as he watched my eyes wander from folder to folder, from books to more and more books.

Thoughts of Dr. Shelton fled when I saw a lead pipe on the ground and then heard a door open and shut inside the building. I ran to the car and left "Mount Hygeia" as quickly as I could.

Enroute to the airport I noticed a saffron sun reflecting off the School's roof. Here had lived a man who fought all his life for democratic principles. He fought for freedom: The freedom of an individual to choose the particular mode of health care he or she desired. He presented a philosophy and a way of life which at times the general public did not understand.

Dr. Shelton's Health School had never been a "Crazy House." No, it was definitely not so, I thought, on my way home. I felt regret for the physical perishing of a school which had been for so many a freshet of new hope.

*Truth alone should guide you. If I speak not truth, if I err, if I am wrong, cast aside what I say and seek elsewhere. Mistake not authority for truth, but make truth your authority.*

HERBERT M. SHELTON  
*Superior Nutrition*

## Part One PORTRAIT OF THE EARLY YEARS 1895-1927



*Wylie, Texas, December 1895: Herbert Shelton with his mother, Mary Frances, and his father, Thomas Mitchell.*

## GROWING UP IN THE RIO GRANDE

The storm had come in typical Texas fashion. First the driving wind had turned the croplands into howling dust, then the rain fell in lightning-crazed sheets. Morning light would reveal how much of the crop survived in knee-deep mud.

But Thomas Mitchell Shelton was a tense man with more than enough burden that October 6, 1895. His wife Mary Frances Guthrie had delivered him a son early in the morning. The infant, born two months premature, was frail and silent in its sleep, kept warm in a wooden cigar box near the iron stove of the run-down farmhouse. The child weighed less than three pounds, and Fanny, the eighteen-year-old mother, could not keep the fear from her eyes. Mitch was a strong young man but quiet and moody and given to bursts of temper like a Texas thunderstorm. He could not help but wonder that morning whether anything could grow—human or otherwise—in that rugged land.

He knelt next to his young wife where she lay in bed and took her hand. “Don’t you worry,” he said. “Our boy’s going to live. I promise you, Herbert Macgolfin is going to live.”

Mitch’s promise came true, and, in the next five years of hard struggle with the land, Herbert Shelton grew into a strong child. He was fond of the farm animals: the cats, a goat, chickens, cows, horses, and his very own dog. By then he had been joined by his three-year-old sister, Alta May, and a ten-month-old brother, Lee Roy.

The great migration from the Dust Bowl farmlands was only a generation away. Farming involved many risks including the uncertainty of agricultural prices. The Sheltons experienced disappointment as they sold their corn for eight cents a bushel. With the exception of wheat, farm prices reached their lowest point since before the Civil War, while at the same time transportation prices reached their highest point. The year was filled with discouragement for Fanny and Mitch. They could not easily make ends meet from the small profits they made after selling their corn, cotton, and milk. The Shelton’s returns dwindled, while their rent on the farm increased. Their modest profits were not adequate for Mitch who wanted more out of life. Soon Fanny and Mitch made plans to leave Wylie and move to Greenville.

In tracing earlier memories Herbert Shelton told me about the day

*Left: Ida Pape and Herbert Shelton married on June 4, 1921, in Washington, D.C.*

*Below: Shelton at age thirty.*



the family moved to Greenville. That day in 1901 Fanny shouted from the open window of the white farmhouse, "Come and eat lunch, Herbert and May! We'll be leaving soon for Greenville." Fanny, watching her children play on the front lawn, smiled tolerantly at Herbert who was clinging to his playmate pets. She put a bowl of stew on the table and handed Mitch a letter from his parents who lived in Kentucky. Mitch had been a farm boy from an English family of twelve children. Fanny, also from Kentucky, was Scottish, one of seven children. Both on occasion received news from their hometown.<sup>1</sup>

Mitch was halfway through reading the letter when he looked up and out the window and saw Herbert still playing on the grass with five baby chicks. Fanny saw the impatient look. She knew all too well Mitch's volatile temper. She also knew how Herbert could easily become engrossed in caring for the animals. Mitch, in a flash of anger, stood in the open doorway. Glaring at Herbert and May, he shouted, "You *come* when your mama calls you!" Herbert and May moved like rabbits through the door, and into the kitchen where Fanny, as usual, calmed the situation in order to have peace at meal time.

Herbert Shelton told me that he remembered his father, after finishing his lunch, checking one more time to see that all the family belongings were securely packed in their two covered wagons. Mitch was always conscientiously concerned about his family's welfare. Fanny climbed in front and held Roy on her lap. Herbert and May sat between Fanny and Mitch as they headed toward Greenville, fifty miles northeast of Dallas. Greenville with a population of ten-thousand seemed a large city to the Sheltons. Wylie had had only three hundred residents.

In Greenville, Mitch eagerly took on a new job as a building contractor. It was a wise move for Thomas Mitchell Shelton to shun farming and go into the contracting business. The growth of industry, the advent of steel, the spread of the factory system, the vast improvements in transportation and communication—these were all part of the rapid advancements taking place. Fanny and Mitch adjusted to the quickened pace in order to survive.

✿ Letters, passing occasionally from Kentucky to Texas after the Shelton's move to Greenville, recorded the growth of the family and

<sup>1</sup> Herbert Shelton never met his grandparents, Tabner and Zilpha Shelton. He knew of them only through correspondence.

indicated its fortunes and misfortunes. In 1901 Mitch wrote his parents that his second daughter, one-year-old Mary, had died of typhoid. Mitch also described the spacious one-story frame house the family had purchased on Moulton Street. Six cows, four horses and a dozen chickens lived in the small barn next to the tool shed Mitch had built behind the house. In addition to working seven or eight hours a day at his growing contracting business, Mitch took on carpentry jobs.

By 1905 Mitch was happy to report that his business had been the best ever: He was able to provide adequately for his family's needs. Sometimes there was extra money to buy new clothes for the children or a new dress for Fanny, or to take the family on a Sunday afternoon picnic. Later that same year, Fanny gave birth to five-pound twin boys. Mitch sadly reported that Zack's twin brother died soon after birth.

In 1907 Mitch's yearly correspondence noted that Herbert was already in seventh grade, May in fifth, Roy in third, Willie Alma in first, and that Bessie and Zack had not yet started school. Fanny, who had turned thirty that month, gave birth to Grace, a six-pound daughter. And, grateful for his children's health, Mitch could recall that so far, Herbert had been the smallest baby, and the only one born prematurely.

Though Mitch had to work hard at raising his seven children, he was pleased to report that each was well behaved and well-mannered, that he was proud of all of them, and that he and Fanny would not have minded a half-dozen more.

Mitch's only complaint concerned his asthma. He had begun inhaling the smoke of the burning leaves of stromonium (jimson weed) that had been prescribed to him by a physician. He would try this new *cure* since everything else he had tried did not give him permanent relief. Mitch hoped to give a better health report in his next letter.

In reminiscing about events in his childhood, Herbert Shelton told me about the conversation between he and his father that occurred one day in 1907. As Mitch put away his quill-tip pen and ink bottle in a compartment of his roll top desk, he said to Herbert, "Please take a letter for grandpa Shelton to the post office for me."

"Sure, Pop."

"Before you go, tell me how the mare is. Is she still not eating?"

"Yes, it's been two days now since she has eaten. I remember Cat wouldn't eat when he hurt himself falling from the shed. He got better. Animals don't eat if they're real sick. Then they get well."



Mitch chuckled at his son's belief and said, "Oh, I don't know about that, Herbert. Anyway, you're a big help to me taking care of the animals." Mitch was well aware of his son's devotion.

Herbert smiled. He tried hard to please his father. Mitch continued. "You're growing up fast and you're growing up fine. I like the way you look out after your brothers and sisters. You mind your mother and you get A's and B's in school. When you get older, you can help me in my business. Go on now; mail my letter."

Herbert did help Mitch with his contracting business while he was a junior at Greenville High School. In the same year, Herbert participated in basketball and football, but his part-time expediting position left little time to participate extensively in sports.

In addition to school work and working with his father, Shelton elaborated his conclusions, formed from observing animals fasting, with what was called at the time "nature cure." Fasting was a means through which the body eliminated toxins (poisonous waste). Since Shelton was already aware that animals achieved great benefits while abstaining from food, it was only logical for him to develop an interest in studying the beneficial results of human participation in fasting.

One afternoon in 1911 Shelton saw Bernarr Macfadden's magazine *Physical Culture* on a newsstand in downtown Greenville. He was attracted by the front cover picture of athletic poses. The magazine contained articles on the rejuvenating powers that occur during a fast, and one on an exercise and weight training program combined with a raw food diet. Thereafter, Shelton began to include less cooked foods and less meat in his diet and substituted for these with fresh fruits, vegetables and nuts. He spent fifteen minutes each day lifting weights. Soon he developed a very muscular build on his 5'8" frame; his biceps measured eighteen inches. A huge change occurred. The once delicate premie was now a one-hundred-and-forty-five-pound robust young man.

Herbert Shelton told me that Macfadden's magazine soon led him to the book *The True Healing Art* by Russell T. Trall, M.D. Trall, born in 1851, had found the current medical practices, such as leeching, bleeding, blistering, and administering mercury and other poisonous mixtures to the sick, a wrong and dangerous approach to health care. "The false system of poisoning was swindling the sick and the well," Trall wrote. Trall considered himself a hygienist. He was not a reformer but a revolutionist. He did not set out to reform the drug system by substituting one set of drugs for another. To him, "it was too much like reforming big lies with little falsehoods like

reforming swearing with obscene language or like reforming robbing with cheating." Trall believed there was no substitute for drug medicines. "We let them alone as evil things and prescribe only good things," was his approach.

Shelton discovered that Trall challenged the medical profession on twelve points that included all the major premises and principles of medical science. Trall believed the medical profession, since its start, taught:

1. *A False Doctrine of the Nature of Disease*
2. *A False Doctrine of the Action of Remedies*
3. *A False Theory of Vitality*
4. *A False Theory of the Vis Medicatrix Naturae*
5. *A False Doctrine of the Relations of the Disease and the Vis Medicatrix Naturae*
6. *A False Doctrine of the Relations of Remedies to Diseases*
7. *A False Doctrine of the Relation of Disease to the Vital Functions*
8. *A False Doctrine of the Relations of Remedies to the Healthy Structures*
9. *A False Theory of the Relations of Organic and Inorganic Matter*
10. *A False Doctrine of Diseases in Relation to their Causes and Effects*
11. *A False Doctrine of the Law of Cure*
12. *A False Doctrine of the Nature and Source of Remedies*<sup>2</sup>

Shelton studied Trall's twelve points. He also studied Trall's position when he gave his famous lecture "The True Healing Art." Trall had asked his listeners, "What is the *vis medicatrix naturae*? It is the vital struggle in self-defense. *It is the disease itself.* Disease and the *vis medicatrix naturae* are not antagonistic entities or forces at war with each other. They are one and the same. And if this be true, it is clear that the whole plan of subduing or "curing" disease with drugs is but a process of subduing and killing the vitality. Every dose diminishes the vitality of the invalid."

The announcement of Trall's doctrine that the remedial powers of nature and the disease are the same (that the *vis medicatrix naturae* which saves and the morbid action which destroys are identical) sounded strange at first to Shelton. But he knew that truths, often in opposition to doctrines long entertained and universally believed,

<sup>2</sup> Dolores Burns (Ed.). *The Greatest Health Discovery*. Chicago: Natural Hygiene Press, 1972: 64.

initially sound strange. Shelton remained grateful to Trall for pointing out to him that disease and the *vis medicatrix naturae* are not hostile powers.

After reading Trall's books Shelton understood that the body is an organic whole. Its diseases are one. They are departures from normal conditions. Disease is an unending indication on the part of the system of the need to rid itself of conditions or substances inimical to health. He also understood that health is not a fixed state. It is a constantly varying condition of the organism ranging from ideal health to the lowest depth of impaired health. But it is always health. Nor is *disease* a fixed state. It is a condition of impaired health and partakes of the same natural variations as does good health. Good health and poor health (diseases) are but varying conditions of life. They are different degrees of the same thing. The oneness and sameness of health and disease is as certain as that a bright light and a dim light are both light.

Trall's rare courage, determination, and indefatigable labors spreading his anti-medical views inspired Shelton to study the writings of Sylvester Graham, Trall's mentor. Shelton first acquired Graham's *Lectures on the Science of Human Life*. Sylvester Graham (1794-1851) had been a Presbyterian preacher before he dedicated his life to the promotion of simple health truths. He was considered a gifted orator and was a prodigious writer. In his writings and lectures he warned the public of the dangers of taking alcohol, tea, coffee, salt, tobacco, and condiments. He advised people to receive adequate amounts of fresh air, sunshine and exercise. He also advised his listeners and readers to acquire habits of cleanliness, to eat wholesome foods, to concentrate on positive thoughts rather than negative thoughts, and to fast when ill instead of taking drug-medicines. "Rather than resorting to physicians and drugs, right living is a better means to good health," Graham proclaimed.

So radical and revolutionary did Graham's teaching sound that it was five years after his death the public began to recognize the importance of his contributions to the betterment of humanity. In 1865, more than ten years after Graham's death, he was exalted as "the father of the philosophy of physiology."<sup>3</sup>

In 1913, during his last year in high school, Shelton obtained other books on "drugless healing." Avidly he studied such books as *Life's Great Law: The Exact Science of Health* by Robert Walker, M.D.

<sup>3</sup> Dolores Burns (Ed.). *The Greatest Health Discovery*. Chicago: Natural Hygiene Press, 1972: 47.

(1841-1921), *Physical Education and Nature's Household Remedies* by Felix Oswald, M.D. (1845-1906), and *Nature Cure* by Charles E. Page, M.D. (1840-1925). He also familiarized himself with the writings of Issac Jennings, M.D. (1788-1874), and Thomas Low Nichols, M.D. (1815-1901). Like Trall, these medical men believed that under the correct conditions, the body heals itself when left alone. As Shelton acquainted himself with more and more authorities on the subject, his interest grew more intense. He became an ardent student of "drugless healing."

Shelton's studies led him occasionally to remark to his father that he should stop accepting the new cures for his chronic asthma. Shelton did not believe that any of the *cures* offered to his father were beneficial. On the contrary. Shelton noticed his father's condition becoming progressively worse.

"So what do you suggest, Herbert? Do you think I ought to lie down like Cat did and not eat? Or should I hibernate? Is that what you think?" Mitch asked sarcastically. Then he would laugh openly and heartily at his son's unconventional suggestions.

But Herbert had no answer and remained silent. However, seeing his father suffer year after year prompted him to search further, though he still found no satisfying solution.

Several weeks later while Shelton was sitting at the kitchen table, he read aloud to his sister May a selection from the work of novelist Upton Sinclair. Sinclair startled the world with his story about how he had recovered from chronic indigestion after a ten-day fast, followed by improved eating and living habits.<sup>4</sup>

May, but slightly interested in her brother's discoveries, listened half-heartedly. "Sinclair fasted ten days? That's remarkable!" she responded in a forced attempt at enthusiasm.

"It's not so amazing. Moses fasted, Elijah fasted, and so did Jesus. Maybe you're not listening when we attend Bible class," Shelton said.

"I listen. Jesus's disciple, Luke, fasted too."

"So he did . . . I'm going to try it, May. I'll experiment. I'd like to see what it feels like to fast."

"Suit yourself, I'd rather eat."

"I'll fast three days."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Upton Sinclair died at the age of ninety in 1968. His popular works include *The Jungle* (1906), *King Coal* (1917), and *Dragon's Teeth* (1943) which won a Pulitzer prize.

<sup>5</sup> On April 17, 1980, Dr. Herbert Shelton told me he felt energetic and rejuvenated after his first fast. He became totally aware of the accelerated healing process that occurs while fasting.

Mitch entered the kitchen. "May, you get started on your homework earlier tomorrow. Herbert, you put those quack books away. Both of you get ready for bed."

After Herbert and May had gone to their rooms, Fanny sat at the kitchen table with her sewing. Mitch, across from her scribbled a plan for the dimensions of a dresser that he was building for the latest addition to the family—their tenth child, Walton. Fanny remarked, "Herbert doesn't leave much time to go out on dates. He has his nose in those health books all the time."

Mitch had no comment on his wife's observation.

"Herbert's so shy around girls," said Fanny. "When he's near a pretty girl he gets tongue-tied and then blushes."

"So?" Mitch commented while he worked on his drawing.

Fanny continued. "Yesterday at the market Mrs. Hunt said her daughter's hoping Herbert will ask her to the senior dance. Then Mrs. Sweeney told me *her* daughter is waiting for the day Herbert will talk to her."

This time Mitch put down his pencil and gave all his attention to Fanny.

"Don't tell Herbert that . . . Leave him alone . . . He's just bashful. He'll outgrow it. Let him do his own asking when he's ready."

"I was just . . ."

"Buttin in." Mitch finished Fanny's sentence while he resumed concentrating on the project for Walton. Mitch and Fanny spoke of the steady growth of the family and of how each child would be cared for. When Walton grew older, they planned to have him share a room with his older brother Zack. Mitch and Fanny's mutual desire was to have yet another child in the future.

In the ensuing months Fanny followed Mitch's advice and did not interfere with her son's social affairs. Shelton remained somewhat bashful and dated but few girls by the time he graduated from Greenville High School in 1913.

Shortly after the family celebrated Herbert's graduation, little Walton suddenly became ill. A physician diagnosed Walton's condition as spasmodic croup. Shelton fearfully watched a team of physicians attempt to *cure* his brother, but the drugs administered did not save Walton's life. Walton died at one year of age and was buried in Greenville in 1914.

☞ Within a few months after the family tragedy, like all young men of the draft age, Shelton watched with concern the outbreak of war in Europe.

I learned from Herbert Shelton during one of our working sessions that he opposed all war and that he did not recognize the authority of Congress to confiscate his life. While recalling memories from World War I, Shelton told me he heard tales of the destruction of Rheims Cathedral and of the mass deportation of French and Belgian civilians to forced labor. Concerned for humanity, he disapproved of the German invasion of Belgium. When England seized American vessels carrying goods to neutral nations, the United States' involvement in war still seemed unbelievable until the unarmed "Lusitania" was torpedoed off the Irish coast. Of the 1,198 civilians killed, 128 were Americans.

President Wilson was troubled at the prospect of war in 1917. Shelton read what the president had said to his secretary of the navy, Josephus Daniels:

There are two reasons why I am determined to keep out of war if possible. The first is that I cannot bring myself to send into the terrible struggle the sons of anxious mothers, many of whom would never return home. The second is that if we enter this war, the great interests which control steel, oil, shipping, ammunition factories, and mines will of necessity become dominant factors, and when the war is over our government will be in their hands. We have been trying, and succeeding to a large extent, to unhorse government by privilege. If we go into this war all we have gained will be lost and neither you nor I will live long enough to see our country wrested from the control of monopoly.<sup>6</sup>

Despite President Wilson's intentions to stay out of war, he saw no alternative when faced with unrestricted submarine warfare. American participation in World War I became inevitable.

Prior to being drafted that same year, however, Shelton was arrested and jailed for disloyal utterance. He was charged after saying to a man who tried to sell him Liberty Bonds, "I have bonds enough, what I *need* is some liberty!" Shelton's remark was motivated by the fact that he abhorred the draft. Shelton was arrested at approximately the same time novelist Upton Sinclair was arrested and charged with trying to incite a riot for reading the *Declaration of Independence* before an audience in Los Angeles. The same national mood that Sinclair offended was affronted also by Shelton's remark.

<sup>6</sup> Abraham S. Eisenstadt. *American History*. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1962: 374.

Shelton was drafted into the Army during his three night stay in the Greenville city jail. After Sinclair and Shelton were released from jail, both arrests were later declared unconstitutional.

## 4

### SAN ANTONIO, 1918

Shelton entered the war with a discernible lack of enthusiasm in January 1918. Shelton was a pacifist; he detested violence. He also detested the medical dictatorship that forced its practices upon the Army, Navy and Air Force. If a member of the armed forces requested the services of any of the other schools of healing, this request was promptly denied.

Shelton described to me how the army forced its inoculation program upon men. His studies led him to doubt the theories supporting the demand for inoculations. He felt the inoculations were far more dangerous than the diseases they were supposed to prevent. Shelton believed that serums were causes of disease and that there was not a tissue in the body which was immune to their action. He felt that any substance that will, in a healthy individual, cause headache, nausea, insomnia and an increase of temperature of two or sometimes three degrees (as the typhoid vaccine may do in the dose used) must be considered a powerful toxin. Consequently, he assumed that certain changes such as myocardial degeneration, vascular changes, kidney degenerations, might easily result, though they might be manifested only at a much later period of life. Moreover the consequences might be more severe should the vaccine be injected into an individual who was at the time suffering from renal, cardiac or other lesions. He felt it was inadvisable to use the vaccine previous to a careful physical examination. Neither he nor the other men in the armed services received such an exam prior to receiving the inoculations.

Out of necessity, Shelton accepted the army's policy and was vaccinated for smallpox without protest; however, he privately washed the vaccination off at once. A week later the physician repeated the vaccination and again Shelton washed it off. This was repeated again. After the failure of the third vaccination to "take," the physician assumed that Shelton was naturally immune. Shelton fasted three days after each inoculation and told no one of what he had done. But Shelton's ruse failed him when three inoculations for typhoid fever

were forced upon him. He was unable to leave the area to wash these off in secret. However, he experienced no after effects.<sup>1</sup>

One week later, Shelton was stationed at Camp Travis in San Antonio. He received \$20.00 a month wages for his assigned K.P. duty and for his work as an assistant company mechanic. Because Shelton hoped that someday he could attend college and continue his study of "drugless healing," he sent money saved for a college fund to his parents in Greenville. Shelton was unaware that Mitch began spending his college savings. Fanny decided to hide the money from Mitch by giving it to an aunt. Mitch, so opposed to his son's choice of study, was ready to do anything to discourage him from attending college. Again, Fanny found herself using her energy to temper her husband's anger.

During Shelton's military obligation, his K.P. duty became advantageous for him. After assisting in preparing and serving the meals, he was able to select fruits and vegetables for his own use in the vegetarian regimen that he had begun at age eighteen.

In the evening after dinner Shelton continued to read books on various therapeutic systems from the past and the present. He studied the types of therapeutic care popular in the nineteenth century, a period that he felt to have been a time of great extremes. Opposite modes of care were adapted. There were the allopaths treating patients with huge doses of drugs while the homeopaths gave their patients infinitesimal amounts. The physiomedicalists treated their patients with the sweat cabinet, and the hydropaths treated theirs with cold water. One group of physicians enervated their patients by bleeding and purging while another group stimulated theirs with brandy and strychnine. Amid the confusion Shelton noted that each school claimed to be in possession of the true system of *cure*. Each system of care declared that all the other schools were murdering their patients.

After studying these opposing methods, Shelton came to believe that the medical system was the most dangerous system of all because the physicians agreed that the sick must be poisoned to restore them to health. If this system were true, he questioned, why did the physicians disagree as to which drugs were best? Some demanded strong drugs and large doses. Others demanded mild drugs and small doses. He noticed that the older and more experienced physicians prescribed fewer and fewer drugs. As some approached retirement, they prescribed no drugs at all.

<sup>1</sup> Discussion with Dr. Herbert Shelton, Alamo Heights, Texas, 12 July 1984.

Shelton began to take an interest in those physicians using but few or no drugs. He studied the works by William Alcott, M.D. (1798-1859), James C. Jackson, M.D. (1811-1895), Mary Gove (1810-1884), Harriet Austin, M.D. (1826-1891), and John Tilden, M.D. (1851-1940). Each of these physicians, with the exception of Mary Gove, had tested the drugging practices at the bedside of the sick and had found them to be unsuccessful. Shelton, at least inchoately, was now searching for something other than the drugging system upon which reliance could be placed in both health and sickness.

Besides his interest in health, Shelton maintained a keen interest in biblical studies. He observed closely the use of fasting in biblical times and saw a relationship between his two branches of interest. During World War I, he frequently read the Bible. Each week in the army he attended a bible class just as he had done in his youth.

One winter evening while attending a class held in a chapel two miles from the army base, Shelton told me that he found himself sitting next to a beautiful girl. Shelton turned his attention from the altar to admire her long, wavy brown hair as Reverend Hubbard's voice carried loudly throughout the chapel: ". . . our life consisteth not in the abundance of the things we possesseth. For what shall we profit if we shall gain the whole world and lose our soul? For what . . ."

Shelton recalled how he could not concentrate. Instead he was thinking of what he might say to this lovely girl after class to detain her. When he looked at her cranberry dress with its feminine white collar, she surprised Shelton by looking back at him.

"Hi," Shelton whispered. Then he smiled, blushed, and quickly put his head down, and pretended to be engrossed with the biblical lesson.

At the end of the hour long study, Reverend Hubbard concluded: "For we are labourers together with God . . . If God be for us, who can be against us? And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God . . . God be with you."

While the girl slowly began putting on her coat, Shelton asked, "What's your name?"

"Ida Pape, What's yours?"

"Herbert Shelton."

"I haven't seen you here before. Are you a soldier?" asked Ida as she looked at his crewcut hair.

"Yes. I grew up in Greenville and when I first came to San Antonio, I fell in love with the city. Are you from San Antonio?"

"I was born thirty-five miles from here in Seguin. I'm just a plain country girl."

"I know where Seguin is. Right near Geronimo Creek in Guadalupe County."

"That's right," Ida answered.

Shelton did not want Ida to leave. He wanted to keep talking to her. "Do you work in the city?" he asked.

"Yes. I work at King's Furniture Store. I do clerical work and typing." She buttoned her coat. "I have to go now. It has been nice to meet you, Herbert."

"It's my pleasure meeting you . . . Will you be here next week?"

"Yes."

"I'll look for you, Ida. See you!" Shelton exclaimed as he watched a small crowd of people sweep Ida away from the churchyard. He knew he would be spending the rest of the week in eager anticipation of seeing Ida again.

☞ World War I ended on November 11, 1918. The United States had won the war, so Americans were told. Supposedly, America won because U.S. troops afforded the Allies a preponderance of power.

Shelton believed that if the war had a cause, it could be found in capitalism, greed, and in the imperialistic lust for markets. He did not believe in war to save democracy or to save civilization. He felt that war destroys democracy and that it destroys real civilization. To him, war really meant to save imperialism.

Shelton, after spending ten months in the military, was discharged with the rank of private first class. He was not one of the 48,000 Americans who were killed in action, not one of the 2,900 cited as missing, nor one of the 56,000 who had died of disease. Shelton was particularly disheartened by the overwhelming statistics of those who had died of disease. His studies and observations led him to believe that many men died because the correct means to produce health had not been employed. Too often the physicians relied heavily upon drugs, treatments and surgery while the benefits of fasting had been totally ignored. As a consequence, he became more deeply dedicated to his own humanitarian purposes.

Shelton had received a personal invitation from General Kelly to make a life-long career in the military. Because of Shelton's superb physical abilities, his superior intelligence and his skillful leadership qualities, he had received attention from General Kelly. Consequently, there was much objection to his discharge. But Shelton declined his offer and decided that he would work with his father in Greenville

and continue to save money for college. A formal education would prepare him to further his education in what was known as “drugless healing” or “nature cure.” He hoped through study to be better equipped to discover the truth about health and disease.

## 5

### THE STUDENT

In 1919, while living in Greenville, Shelton frequently returned to San Antonio to visit Ida Pape. They occasionally spoke of marriage plans. Shortly thereafter, Ida moved to Washington, D.C., with her parents, brother and sister. In that same year Shelton left Greenville to attend the Bernarr Macfadden College of Physcultopathy in Chicago. He had managed to rebuild his savings account despite the obstacle Mitch had put before him. Shelton was hurt and angry when he learned Mitch spent one-fourth of his college savings before Fanny thwarted Mitch’s spending. But Shelton, with his unusually kind and forgiving nature, soon accepted his father’s actions and looked upon the matter as having used part of his college fund to help support the family. Anyway, there was nothing that could prevent him from pursuing his goal.

When Shelton was at the Macfadden College the school was in the doldrums; the educational curriculum was poor and rather disorganized. College students had tired of the Wilson administration and were ready to listen to President Harding who urged a return to “not heroism, but healing, not nostrums but normalcy.” Shelton observed smug professors sitting comfortably in their sheltered classrooms. He knew that the old classical institution that offered a centuries-old way of teaching could not survive in an age of intellectual complexities and conflicting philosophies. The professors’ peaceful days were numbered. Shelton hoped that soon a major change would occur in educational curriculum and procedures.

After Shelton received his first technical training in fasting, nutrition, and hydrotherapy (water-cure), he interned at the Crane Sanitarium in Elmhurst, Illinois, where he received his first clinical experience in fasting. Crane Sanitarium, then one of eight fasting institutions in the United States, was conducted by Milo A. Crane, M.D. Crane was a surgeon who had abandoned medical methods to work as Macfadden’s house physician for four years before opening his own fasting

institution. Crane adhered to the “Macfadden methods” of healing with the exception of adding electrical treatments and traction to his mode of care. At Crane’s Sanitarium, fasters received massages, sweat baths, hot and cold sitz baths, enemas, exercise, traction and electrical treatments. Sometimes chiropractic adjustments were performed. For seven months Shelton studied at Crane’s. Afterward, he stayed in Chicago where he took a post-graduate course at the Lindlahr College of Natural Therapeutics and did clinical work at Dr. Lindlahr’s Sanitarium.

At Lindlahr’s Sanitarium Shelton came in contact with what he called the “surgical frenzy in appendicitis.” Many cases of this illness were sent from several hospitals to Lindlahr for care. Shelton described what happened to those who were suffering from appendicitis that rejected medical treatment:

Upon their arrival at the hospital they were examined and told that they would be dead in two hours unless they were operated upon immediately. The majority of these frightened individuals submitted to the operation and many of them died. But there are always many people who are not easily frightened and who cannot be stampeded into ill-advised action. These would refuse the operation and it was these patients that the nurses at the hospital would send over to Dr. Lindlahr’s place.

So many of these cases who had but two hours to live were received at Lindlahr’s that they became known as “two hour cases.” By fasting, cold water applications and rest, these cases all recovered. There was never a death among them. It will be instructive, as well as interesting, to record that, while Dr. Lindlahr used cold applications over the region of the appendix, Dr. Tilden applied hot packs over the same region. Both men were equally successful with these opposite practices. They did both employ the fast.<sup>1</sup>

Shelton learned that the diagnosis of appendicitis was difficult and that many mistakes were made. He discovered that many cases diagnosed as appendicitis were anything from colic to kidney stones. Shelton recalled the following story which was told to him by Macfadden: “A man entered a hospital in the evening for an appendectomy the following morning. When the nurse went to prepare him for the operation the next morning she was unable to find her patient. A few hours later, the man, a painter by trade, was

<sup>1</sup> Herbert M. Shelton. “Have You Been Carved?” *Dr. Shelton’s Hygienic Review*, San Antonio: Dr. Shelton’s Health School (August 1957): 275.



found hard at work on the job. He had had a bowel movement during the night and his supposed appendicitis came to an abrupt end.”

Shelton was appalled by the numerous misdiagnosed clients. Many had received treatment for something other than their actual health problem. At Lindlahr's Shelton described himself as having “burned the midnight oil in study.” He thought he knew something, but he had much to learn. He hoped his next period of study at the C.O. Sahler Sanitarium in Kingston, New York, would provide greater insight into the problems met in a vast variety of cases.

☞ On June 4, 1921, while Shelton was interning at Kingston, Herbert Macgolfin Shelton and Ida Julia Pape exchanged vows to remain together “for richer or poorer, in sickness and in health, until death do us part.” Herbert was twenty-five; Ida was twenty-one. They married at the Pape residence in Washington, D.C. Ida looked radiant in the long white lace wedding dress her mother made for her. Herbert slipped a simple but elegant gold band engraved with their initials on Ida's finger. A few friends and several members from the Pape family came to celebrate. Mitch and Fanny could not afford to attend, but they wrote and wished the newlyweds a long, happy life together.

Ida had told Herbert she was brought up to know “hard work doesn't kill anyone.” And so it was. Work was quickly resumed after their brief honeymoon. Ida did clerical work at the C.O. Sahler Sanitarium while Herbert examined the methods of care.

Sahler Sanitarium was managed by a homeopath. (A homeopath treats disease by administering drugs in very small doses. In large doses the same drugs would produce in a healthy person symptoms similar to those of the disease.) This sanitarium, unlike the Crane Sanitarium in Elmhurst, was not employing the “Macfadden methods”. At the Sahler Sanitarium, Shelton felt he was primarily learning what *not* to do when caring for the sick. Early in his studies at Sahler he determined that he himself would henceforth avoid the evils of suppressing symptoms. He wrote:

Outstanding in my memory is the case of a woman patient who died at the C.O. Sahler Sanitarium while I was there in 1921. The woman suffered with cancer of the uterus. She presented the proverbial “picture of health” in spite of her advanced pathology. It was difficult for her friends and family to realize that she was sick.

There was constant bleeding from her uterus as the body

attempted to preserve its integrity by draining away the septic material generated in the cancer. On one occasion Dr. Ahmfelt said to me: “I am going to stop that bleeding, if it is the last thing I do.” I had learned by this time to hold my counsel, but said to myself: “It will be the last thing you do for her, if you succeed.”

A few mornings later, my wife and I were strolling over the sanitarium grounds. Dr. Ahmfelt came along. He remarked to me in passing: “I stopped that bleeding; I did it with an ice pack.” He rushed on and I said to my wife: “That is murder.”

About two hours passed and my telephone rang. Dr. Ahmfelt was on the other end of the line. He instructed me to come to the third floor of the main building, giving me the room number to which he desired me to come. I hastened over and joined in the room he designated. There on the bed lay the cancer patient whose bleeding had been suppressed. She was in a coma (a septic coma) from which she did not recover. The septic material that should have been drained away accompanied by a small loss of blood, was absorbed into her blood stream, when the bleeding was suppressed. It is always dangerous to suppress the body's conservative and protective measures, no matter by what means the suppression is achieved. It is usually better to bear with symptomatic annoyances than to suppress them in the interest of a short-lived and fictional period of comfort.<sup>2</sup>

At Kingston Shelton learned from such experiences that the best remedy enables the body to work without hindering the vital processes in any way. Every organism has its own inherent powers to remove its wastes, repair its injuries and heal its impairments.

After eight months at Sahlers, The Sheltons moved to New York City where Herbert attended the American School of Chiropractic.

Shelton taught evening courses at the American School of Naturopathy in dietetics to pay for his education. While Shelton attended daytime classes, it was common for him to teach basic principles of health to other students, although these principles often stood in conflict with the teaching of Dr. Benedict Lust, president and founder of the School. Shelton, in his own teachings, revised the teachings of his professors because he believed these often included incorrect principles. He felt there was too much emphasis on curing and unnecessary emphasis on types of treatment. There was also endless disagreement about which treatment was important. What one doctor swore by, another doctor condemned. In spite of the

<sup>2</sup> Herbert M. Shelton. “The Evils of Suppression.” *Dr. Shelton's Hygienic Review*, San Antonio: Dr. Shelton's Health School (February 1970): 131.

diversity of opinion and hopeless disagreement about methods of treatment, Shelton discovered that each doctor at the American School of Naturopathy and the American School of Chiropractic seemed to be having about equal success. Soon he began questioning the validity of any treatment—since success seemed to be more accident than knowledge.

Though disappointed in his education, Shelton graduated from the American School of Naturopathy with a Doctor of Naturopathy (N.D.) and a Doctor of Naturopathic Literature (N.D. Litt.). Afterward, he took charge of Dr. Schwartz's Naturopathic Sanitarium in Syracuse, New York, while Dr. Schwartz traveled in Germany. Shelton and his wife resided in Syracuse for four months.

Shelton was soon approaching his twenty-sixth birthday. He believed the Naturopathic Sanitarium in Syracuse was just as good a place as any for him to begin writing his first book.

## 6

### SYNTHESIZING THE HYGIENIC SYSTEM

During the time Herbert Shelton and I spent together discussing his life's work, I discovered one of his greatest pleasures was working on his books. I learned from him that he self-published his first book called *Fundamentals of Nature Cure* in 1922. Ida offered her support to this endeavor by typing the 32,000 word manuscript. Shelton dedicated the book: "TO HER, whose loving heart and patient hands have made this book possible—my companion and wife—Ida Julia Pape Shelton."

Shelton described his book as a naive attempt to unearth the lost principles of "nature cure" and to lead men and women back to "genuine nature cure." He hoped to have his work accepted by the "nature curists," but they rejected it because they judged his approach too radical. He felt temporarily thwarted in his search to unravel the truth about health and disease because he had not yet realized that Natural Hygiene was a separate system from "nature cure."

After feeling some disappointment from his first published book, Shelton told me he was then called home to Greenville by a family emergency. When he arrived home, he learned his sixteen-year-old sister Bessie had died in a hospital following an appendectomy.

Young Bessie Shelton, for whom life had barely begun, was buried at East Mount Cemetery in Greenville.

Prior to Bessie's death, Shelton had studied *Appendicitis* published in 1909 by John Tilden, M.D. Tilden strongly condemned the surgical treatment of the illness and outlined his own successful, non-surgical plan of fasting and prohibition of laxatives and cathartics. This book, along with his experiences at Lindlahr College, made Shelton wish that Bessie could have fasted, thereby possibly saving her life. His observations on the treatment of his sister by the medical profession confirmed his belief that surgery was too often the wrong approach to health care.

Following the tragedy Shelton received his fourth doctorate in 1923. He graduated from the American School of Chiropractic with a Doctor of Chiropractic (D.C.). After graduation Shelton decided to drop the hopeless task of having his first book accepted by the "nature curists." He could not make hygienists out of "nature curists." He objected to the term "nature cure" for two reasons: "Nature is not engaged in *curing* disease and the phrase 'nature cure' had been so badly abused that it no longer had any settled meaning. Anything and everything was included under the phrase."

Shelton now realized that the hygienic movement, launched in 1830 by Sylvester Graham, was a separate and distinct system. The hygienic movement was in a state of chaos because not all of the physicians of the 1830's and 40's (with the exception of Graham and Gove) had escaped the drugging practice in the same way. Some discontinued the use of drugs by way of using bread pills, others by the use of hydrotherapy. Some physicians employed a little Hygiene, a little hydrotherapy or both. There was no coherency of method, nor was there an accurately descriptive name for a system. Hygienic principles had been so intermingled with medical treatment, osteopathy, chiropractic and naturopathy that separation was practically impossible. These systems were all systems of palliation. Shelton believed they were not efficient methods to meet humankind's needs. Hygiene stood apart. It stood alone. yet, it was in a moribund state, buried beneath waves of therapeutic theories and the detritus of a thousand *cures*.

"I will bring clarity out of chaos," Shelton told Ida. "I will resuscitate a dying movement. I will rebuild and synthesize the system of Hygiene. Principles that are forgotten will be refurbished. A whole literature will be salvaged! I will fan its glowing embers into a fierce flame!"

Shelton revised his first book and changed the title to *An Introduction to Natural Hygiene*. In this revised work he expounded the principles of the hygienic system. Shelton explained in his first chapter that disease was a remedial process, Nature's method of healing. Symptoms of disease, such as coughing, sneezing, diarrhea, fever and inflammation, are purging efforts in which the body attempts to heal itself. He outlined two important rules in caring for the acute sufferer:

*In treating an acute disease* the first rule to learn is: DON'T DO IT. The disease, it must be remembered, is a vital process in self-defense. It is not to be treated, but permitted to run its natural course.

Rule number two: *In all acute disease, don't feed.* The more the invalid eats the worse he becomes, so that the danger lies really on the other side. All food should be withheld until acute symptoms subside. As long as there is any pain, fever or inflammation or other trouble, to give food is to add to the trouble.

He said this concerning the chronic sufferer:

In treating chronic sufferers a fast is not always necessary; the invalid can recover without it if his diet is cut down to a very small amount and properly given. This method, however, will require longer to accomplish the same result than the fast. Likewise, if the invalid is not able to undergo a period of rest from his work, physical or mental, but can cut down the amount to some extent, he will require much longer to recover.

Elimination is accomplished by the body itself (if it is given an opportunity), but cannot be forced. But if the organs of elimination are given more work than they are able to perform the toxemia must continue to increase. If output does not equal income, there is bound to be an accumulation of the residue within the system. If the invalid is piling into his system by way of food, drink, tobacco, etc., more than the organs of elimination can send out, how is the invalid to recover? If there is gastro-intestinal putrefaction resulting in the absorption of more toxic material than these organs can handle it must be stopped before recovery can take place. The fast will accomplish all this.

For both the acute and chronic sufferer one must:

1. Stop all enervating habits.
2. Stop the absorption of all poisons from the outside.
3. Give the organism an opportunity to recuperate its dissipated force.

4. Supply any element or condition that is required for the comfort of the faster.<sup>1</sup>

Shelton outlined the absolute need for physical, sensory, mental and physiological rest, for sunshine, fresh air and wholesome food in hygienically caring for the sick. This book was his first step in conveying what he believed to be the truth about health and disease.

Following the new publication Shelton did post-graduate work at the Peerless College of Chiropractic in Chicago. This college work was followed by an internship at the Crandall Health School in York, Pennsylvania.

Shelton received \$130 a month for his intern work. Ida worked as a secretary for the Crandall brothers, George and Lewis, who were both osteopaths.<sup>2</sup> The Crandall brothers were Tildenites and adhered to the "Tilden methods." John Tilden, M.D., included in his theory the contention that there is no single cause of disease. Tilden stressed that diet is not the only factor to be considered in the maintenance of health and management of disease. All forms of stress—environmental, physical, mental and emotional—are causative factors in disease.

At the Crandall Health School fasters rested in bed, but the fast was assisted by one or more "forcing measures" employed to increase elimination. Crandall's fasters were given regular enemas, frequent gastric lavages and daily exercise. In 1924 Shelton made this observation: "It was while at Crandall's that I first conceived the idea that the enema is not only not necessary, but positively harmful. It was here that I made my first tests that enabled me to get away from the employment of the enema. It was here, also, that I observed the enervating effect of the lavage. Here we did not employ hydrotherapy and manipulative treatments and we did not employ electrical treatments."

Shelton had prepared himself to exclude from his future care of fasters everything except exercise.<sup>3</sup>

While Ida lived at the Crandall Health School, she gave birth to their first son on June 29, 1924. He was named Bernarr Herbert

<sup>1</sup> Herbert M. Shelton. *An Introduction to Natural Hygiene*. Mokolumne Hill, California: Health Research, 1963: 13-16, 58-59. The word "patient" was changed to "invalid" in this quote upon Shelton's request, 16 April 1983.

<sup>2</sup> The Crandall brothers were strongly opposed to organized religion. Their beliefs influenced Shelton. Two years after meeting the Crandall brothers, Shelton no longer participated in the church of his upbringing—The Southern Baptist Church.

<sup>3</sup> Two years after he had opened his first health school in 1928, Dr. Shelton excluded exercise, also, during the fast.

Shelton. The boy was so named to honor Shelton's first mentor: the great public health figure, Bernarr Macfadden, the father of *Physical Culture*. The Sheltons were elated. They hoped and planned to have a family with three children.

Shelton described to me his phone conversation with his mother in Greenville which occurred before he terminated his eighteen-month stay at the Crandall Health School. Fanny had arranged to receive his call at a nearby neighbor's home because she and Mitch had no telephone.

Herbert asked his mother if she were pregnant again.

"Fanny answered, "No! That's enough children for us now. Thirteen babies is enough for any women to have!"

Fanny thanked Herbert for sending the copy of his first book.

"Did Dad read it?" Herbert inquired.

"Well . . . uhh . . . no." Herbert was not told that his father's spite against his chosen career had grown. Mitch had burned his book in their wood burning stove.

Quickly changing the subject, Fanny asked, "What's the title of the second?"

"It's called *Food and Feeding* . . . I've just started on another book presently under the title *Human Life: Its Philosophy and Laws*. I'm synthesizing a science of health called Natural Hygiene."

Interested in her son's work and welfare, Fanny then inquired whether Herbert liked living in Pennsylvania. Herbert preferred living in Texas and said he missed the mild Texas winters. Fanny knew that Herbert wore the same clothing in summer and winter while living with the family. His habit prompted her to ask, "Herbert, have you been wearing a winter coat?"

"I . . . ah . . ." Herbert did not offer the information that he wore a coat, only, even when the temperature was below 0°. Neither did he mention that he took an outdoor cold plunge during the winter months.<sup>4</sup>

After his evasive stuttering, Fanny demanded, "Don't go to the extreme . . . Dress warm in the winter!"

Fanny then let five-year-old Eugene say hello to his brother.

"Hi, Herbert. When I grow up, I'm going to be a pilot. Here's Sam. He passed second grade."

"What's new, Sam?" asked Herbert.

<sup>4</sup> Throughout life Shelton wore light clothing in the winter months, but he ceased taking a daily cold plunge after only two months experimentation. In fact, he laughed at his earlier interest in the cold plunge and called it 'foolish, enervating activity.' (Discussion with author, Dr. Shelton's Health School: San Antonio, Texas, 19 April 1980.)

"Nothin' . . . If I get sick, I want you to be my doctor . . . Here's Mom again."

"I hope you'll come home for a visit," Fanny said. "We all want to meet Ida and Bernarr."

"We'll try to come after we get settled in New York City where I'm going to open my office practice. Maybe I'll have the money then to come home after I become established."

Fanny told Herbert that Mitch's business had been going well and that Zack, now a freshman in high school, had helped him after school just as Herbert had. Fanny congratulated her son on the publication of his book and wished him luck in New York City. Mother and son ended their conversation with the hope that they would see one another soon—a hope not soon to be realized as long as Shelton continued to promote the use of the fast in his mode of care.

## 7

### PRACTICING IN NEW YORK CITY

In 1925 Herbert, Ida, and Bernarr lived in the four rooms adjacent to Dr. Shelton's two-room office located on 111th Street, New York City. The year was a prosperous one in the United States. The total output of the economy had increased by more than 30 percent since World War I. Transportation had improved. There were more roads for automobiles. In downtown New York, as in the downtown sections of all the mid-continent cities, hotels and large department stores were under construction. The rapid advancements coincided with an increase in the number of health seekers who chose Shelton's care.

"I'm not in the curing business," Shelton would tell clients. "I never cured anyone in my life. I offer no magical potions, drugs or treatments. I only direct and educate the health seeker in understanding how to supply the normal conditions of life under which the body carries forward its self-healing processes with the greatest efficiency."

Shelton felt his primary purpose as a hygienist was to direct the expression of life into wholesome channels. He consistently taught his clients to understand that drugs do not eliminate the cause of illness. Drugs that cannot be used and that must be rejected in a state of health are equally useless and must be rejected in sickness. "Sickness makes

no radical changes in the organism and no radical changes in its needs," he would tell his clients.

In addition to having a successful hygienic office practice Shelton worked at improving his writing skills. He wrote prolifically for three publications while still at work on his two new books.

He became a staff member of Macfadden's *Physical Culture* magazine, the same magazine that had introduced him to "drugless healing" fourteen years earlier when he was a high school boy. *Physical Culture* had since then expanded its circulation to an audience of over one million readers. Shelton also did ghost writing for Macfadden: he wrote two of his mentor's books as well as several editorials. Shelton also prepared the section on fasting in the eight-volume edition of Macfadden's *Encyclopedia of Health*.

Moreover, he co-founded a monthly magazine with hygienic practitioner, G.R. Clements, N.D. The publication, called *How to Live*, was published in Hugo, Oklahoma. One of the many vital topics included in a monthly department concerned "Motherhood and Care of Children." Under the pen name of Ida J. Pape, Shelton told readers that pregnancy is not a disease and that childbirth should not need a surgical operation. Every mother should nurse her child and care for herself properly to avoid weakness, deformity, sickness and disease. To accomplish this, proper care must begin before conception, he advised.

At the same time Shelton was writing a daily column for the *New York Evening Graphic*, a magazine with over ten thousand subscribers. Shelton wrote almost all of the daily *Graphic* editorials. His name appeared above the signature of *Graphic* staff member Bernarr Macfadden. Shelton's other co-workers included Ed Sullivan, Walter Winchell and Fulton Oursler. Sullivan and Winchell were reporters for the *Graphic*; Oursler was the supervising editor.<sup>1</sup>

Although Shelton had daily contact with all three men, he worked more closely with Macfadden. Together they criticized medical treatment and emerged into public controversy. For example, on November 2, 1926, words written by Shelton and Macfadden in the *New York Evening Graphic* suggested "malpractice" concerning the medical treatment and death of the famous magician, Houdini. Houdini died a few days after the surgical removal of his appendix.

<sup>1</sup> Fulton Oursler later wrote *The Greatest Story Every Told* which was published in 1949. Walter Winchell later became a famous narrator while Ed Sullivan became a famous master of ceremonies.

Shelton declared that in cases of appendicitis, if left alone, the poison would be carried out of the system in the same manner all poisons are carried out.<sup>2</sup>

A copy of Macfadden's telegram to the hospital where Houdini was treated reads in part: "To Superintendent of Grace Hospital, Detroit, Michigan. More than one million readers of my publications are anxious to know how Houdini was fed during his illness and other details of his treatment that have been withheld . . ."

Despite Macfadden's request, all medical treatment was kept secret. The Houdini case quickly became a closed subject.

Shelton had found in his practice that fasting and hygienic care for appendicitis was less dangerous than surgical removal of the appendix. He had supervised fasting for several victims of appendicitis, and all had recovered.

Other cases involving various illnesses included Kate Mann, age ten months, who fasted four days even though five physicians had predicted she would die of pneumonia. The child's symptoms of general weakness, fever, coughing and rust-colored sputum disappeared during the fast. Art Radke, age forty-two, fasted fourteen days for an abdominal tumor the size of a golf ball. Under hygienic care, Radke completely recovered; the tumor was gone after the fast by a process called autolysis (breakdown of a cell or tissue by self-produced enzymes). Another case involved Yer Xiong, age fifty-nine, who fasted ten days for arthritis and thereafter followed a hygienic lifestyle. This meant receiving plenty of fresh air, exercise and sunshine, following a healthful diet as well as a healthful "mental diet" of satisfying productive activity, relaxation and rest. Xiong, because of her restructured lifestyle, no longer suffered from her four-year bout with arthritic pain.

Lisa Krueger, a twenty-seven-year-old school teacher was another one of Shelton's clients who recovered through hygienic means. In 1927 Krueger had taken the subway to 111th Street and arrived early for her appointment with Shelton in his small office located next to a photographer.

"Dr. Shelton, I'm desperate!" she exclaimed. "I've been to three doctors and each said the same thing: I have breast cancer. They all said my breast must be removed."

While examining Krueger, Shelton remarked, "Since the United States will observe a *Cancer Week*, I've been bombarded with health

<sup>2</sup> Attorney Melvin Kimmel. "Houdini's Appendicitis." *Dr. Shelton's Hygienic Reivew*, San Antonio: Dr. Shelton's Health School (October 1978): 49.

seekers who have been diagnosed as having cancer. Of those so-called 'cancer victims,' many had not been diagnosed correctly. I've only seen a few people for whom surgery was advisable. All these newspaper articles about cancer are frightening the public. The physicians' offices are filled with fearful patients. I wish this misleading propaganda would stop!"

"Do you know what causes cancer?" Krueger asked.

"It is doubtful that cancer is ever due to any single causative factor. It is impossible for me to place my finger on any particular excess and say this one factor is the cause of any cancer. You may not even have cancer."

Dr. Shelton continued. "We poison ourselves in two ways: from within the body (Endogenous Toxemia) and from what we take into the body from the outside (Exogenous Toxemia)."

"What is toxemia, Dr. Shelton?"

"Toxemia is the saturation of the blood stream and tissues with toxic waste. It is caused by insufficient nerve energy to perform basic eliminative tasks at the cellular level. A life style dominated by the lack of regular exercise, inadequate sleep and rest, clean, pure distilled water, a wholesome diet, and the lack of ability to cope with life's ups and downs, inevitably leads to mental, emotional, physical and spiritual exhaustion. The body continues to function but in a state of enervation. When nerve energy is low, elimination of toxic waste is impeded. The body must operate under a toxic handicap. Toxins (poisons) saturate first the blood stream and then the cells/tissues/organs/systems. Continued overload results in waste being stored in out of the way depots: cysts, tumors, arteries, joints and fatty tissues."

"Dr. Shelton, I'm familiar with your column in the *New York Evening Graphic*. I am aware toxins can be eliminated from the body through fasting. Should I fast?"

"Yes. You may have an enlarged milk gland the size of a small orange. Rest and take only distilled water. Call me every morning of your fast. Enervating habits bring on and maintain an imperfect elimination which builds toxemia. Afterward there is a subtle building of organic disease. We will reverse this process beginning with a fast and then followed by a healthful way of living. A removal of cause secures a return to health no matter where the inflammation is located."

After the third day of her fast, Krueger excitedly reported, "I can't believe the lump is gone, Dr. Shelton! I'm so happy I want to shout the news from my housetop! I'll tell people about you. You

cured me. The others thought only of the knife."

"I didn't cure you," Shelton answered firmly. "The chief obstacle between you and understanding health is in your reliance upon cures. It is not I who cures but the sick organism that heals itself. *Healing is a biological process.* The healing power of Nature is inherent in the living organism. It is not a special or unique power, nor is it a single power. It is simply the ordinary vital power by which we live and grow."

"I understand. I'm relieved that I didn't resort to surgery!"

Shelton replied, "I feel most surgery is unnecessary. But I know there are *needs for surgery* and a skilled surgeon can be a valuable person to have around on numerous occasions. Your case was one where the surgeon was not needed."

"I'll share this knowledge, Dr. Shelton."

"Fine. Tell others about the remarkable healing powers of the body during a fast. Tell them health is achieved through correct living."

In another case, Shelton was asked to accompany Joe Goodman by subway to talk with his ailing sister, Elaine Cohen. Goodman assured Shelton that he and his sister were convinced of the correctness of the principles of Natural Hygiene that Shelton expounded in his daily column in the *New York Evening Graphic*.

On arrival at her home Cohen explained to Shelton that her chief symptoms were great weakness and a dropsical condition of her chest and abdomen. She explained that three months before she had undergone exploratory surgery and that her liver, heart and kidneys were found to be in good condition with no tumors. Cohen had been told that she had a rare disease about which her physicians knew little. Nothing could be done except to tap her at intervals and draw off the accumulated fluid. The tapping procedure was tried for five months. Cohen noticed the procedure became necessary with increasing frequency while she became weaker and weaker.

Cohen was desperate when she asked Shelton, "What is your opinion of my condition?"

Shelton answered, "I know no more about the immediate cause of the edema than the physicians and surgeons who took part in the consultation. However, I know some of the causes of disease and how to remove them. I'm sure we could avoid tapping by resorting to a fast. A fast will cause the absorption of the accumulated fluid."

Cohen asked, "Would you be willing to cooperate with our family physician in conducting the fast?"

"Yes, I'll cooperate with the physician, but what makes you think



he'll cooperate with me?"

"I'm sure Dr. Pierce, our family doctor for twenty years, will cooperate with you. He's an extremely open-minded man."

"We shall see," replied Shelton.

Two days later, Cohen called Shelton and said she had misjudged Pierce. When Pierce heard of her intended fast, He wanted nothing to do with such quackery. Furthermore, Pierce warned that her heart would collapse, and she would die if she abstained from food for more than six days. Against Pierce's advice Cohen chose to fast.

The fast proceeded uneventfully for twelve days. After an interval of hygienic living, Cohen underwent a second fast of thirteen days. All the edema in her chest and abdomen was absorbed. Cohen had made a total recovery under hygienic care.

Three months later, Cohen informed Shelton that Pierce apologized for his error in condemning the idea of fasting. Pierce had found that in Germany fasting was very successfully used in cases like Cohen's. He asked Cohen for her permission to take her to Mt. Sinai Hospital for a complete check-up. At Mt. Sinai Pierce, with the assistance of the physicians who had taken part in the previous consultation, pronounced Cohen in excellent health.

Shelton made these conclusions about Cohen's case: "Nobody learned anything from the experience. I had taken a woman who was slowly dying, and, without therapy or treatments, that is, by intelligently doing nothing, brought her back to a state of good health and it excited no curiosity in the physicians and surgeons of Mt. Sinai. It was just another of those inexplicable cases. At Mt. Sinai they are still tapping dropsical cases or wrecking their kidneys with diuretic drugs. The case of Elaine Cohen did not receive a write-up in the medical journals. Cohen's relatives and friends were happy over her recovery, but the do-nothing plan of care was not for them. They were like a friend of mine who said: 'When I'm sick, I want real medicine, not bread pills.' By 'real medicine' he meant the usual poisons that are commonly administered to the sick."<sup>3</sup>

☞ In the days that followed, Shelton's clients were continuously getting well. Health seekers who had suffered from digestive disorders, obesity, alcoholism, heart disease, backaches, headaches, kidney stones, insomnia and prostatitis, as well as other clients who had had tumors or cysts, or who supposedly needed surgery for one

<sup>3</sup> Herbert M. Shelton. "Intelligently Doing Nothing." *Dr. Shelton's Hygienic Review*, San Antonio: Dr. Shelton's Health School (May 1980):

reason or another, were miraculously recovering their health through fasting and other hygienic means. "At first I thought of malpractice as an isolated and only an occasional occurrence," Shelton wrote, "but gradually I became convinced that the practice of medicine is often malpractice.

Gradually also I became aware of the fact that the conditioning and training of the physician leads him to accept malpractice as the norm of medical practice. A physician sees human wreckage that results from his practices but accepts this as a normal part of existence. Only occasionally does one of the physicians kick over the traces or quit the profession."<sup>4</sup>

## 8

### DEFENDING HYGIENIC PRINCIPLES

On April 16, 1927, Ida gave birth to Walden Ellwood Shelton. Since Shelton avidly read Thoreau and greatly loved Nature, he named his second son after Thoreau's hut on Emerson's land on the shores of Walden Pond, where Thoreau wrote *Walden*. In *Walden* (published in 1854) Thoreau describes his famous experiment in living close to Nature. Thoreau's approach obviously recommended itself to one so devoted to Nature as Herbert Shelton.

Baby Walden, however, did not enter into a serene atmosphere. All had not been easy for Ida and Herbert while living in New York City. Shelton was being harassed in his hygienic practice. He could not teach his belief unopposed that the monopoly in health care by the medical profession was often destructive to humanity and that it was profitable big business.

Opposition came from medical advocates, from the police, and from the general public. Shelton's fight against unsound medical practices and his insistence that the medical profession was misleading the public weighed heavily upon him. His anti-establishment way of thinking was being actively resisted.

In August 1927 an unidentified enemy who opposed hygienic care, submitted Shelton's name to the police. He accused Shelton of using medical treatments while being licensed only in chiropractic

<sup>4</sup> Interview with Herbert M. Shelton conducted by Attorney Melvin Kimmel, San Antonio, 5 March 1974.

and naturopathy. The police seized Shelton at his office and brought him to the city jail where, despite his plea of innocence, he was charged with practicing medicine without a license.

"I never prescribed drugs to anyone in my life!" Shelton declared in an attempt to defend himself. "The work I am doing is legal. The practice of Natural Hygiene has every moral and spiritual justification to exist and to be practiced by a professional natural hygienist." The judge, however, was not convinced and found Shelton guilty because he examined a client, prescribed a diet, and received pay. This constituted the practice of medicine said the judge.

Shelton was not in a financial position to appeal the judge's decision. Instead, out of his scant savings Shelton had to pay a hundred dollar fine.

One month later Ida was nursing Walden during her husband's second arrest. A similar circumstance occurred; a person wanting to sabotage Shelton's practice had gone to the police. The police entered Shelton's apartment on 111th Street and escorted him to the New York City Jail, known as "The Tombs." Once again, he was charged with practicing medicine without a license. Ida and her brother spent the night trying to borrow three hundred dollars from family members and friends for bail. They were successful. Shelton was released from "The Tombs" in the morning.

Ida felt particular frustration because of the harassment suffered by her husband. Her days of nursing Walden abruptly ended. She became dry—permanently.<sup>1</sup>

One day shortly after the second arrest Shelton told his wife at dinner that he had been fired from the staff of the *New York Evening Graphic*. Ida sensed the sadness and disappointment in her husband's voice. She asked, "But why?"

Shelton, holding his head in his hands, replied, "I was unceremoniously booted off the staff because of a conflict between one of my articles and the interests of the tobacco company. I turned in two articles to the editor about the dangers of smoking. On the day the second article appeared, there were three full-page ads for cigarettes."

Ida thought it was unfair, "That's not *your* fault. Isn't it the fault of the editor who accepted your articles?"

Shelton shrugged his shoulders. "The editor used the excuse that he was told to run anything I wrote."

<sup>1</sup> Interview with Ida J. Shelton, Alamo Heights, Texas, 1 July 1981.

Shelton paused before he explained he was at fault and that he had been previously warned. He once condemned the practice of taking yeast when it was highly popular. In reply to his article he received promotional material from the American Yeast Company along with a condemning letter from a man who owned a part in the company. Shelton told Ida, "I was instructed that if I couldn't say anything favorable about a product advertised in the *Graphic*, I should simply remain quiet. But I can't keep quiet! If I can't write the truth, then I don't want to work there anymore anyway."

Ida admired Herbert's integrity and hoped that his dismissal meant he would spend more time at home. She remembered a similar occurrence while Herbert was working in the question and answer department for Macfadden's *Physical Culture* magazine. Ida recalled, "I remember when the salt companies had people eating iodized salt to prevent goiter. When that women asked your advice about iodized salt for her baby, you said that a side effect caused goiters. Your answer offended the salt advertisements in the magazine and put Bernarr Macfadden on the spot."

Shelton smiled and was proud of himself for offering replies without regard for the advertisers. Shelton had told Macfadden that if he had to subordinate his replies to the interests of the advertisers and thereby risk hurting people, then he wanted to drop the column. Shelton said to Ida, "Macfadden agreed with my replies. He did drop the column. It was then that Macfadden told me the greatest mistake he ever made in his life was when he organized his publishing business into a corporation and took in stockholders and a board of directors. Macfadden said to me, 'Profits and more profits, dividends and bigger dividends are all those fellows are interested in.' Since he had formed his corporation he said that his life had been nothing but a series of compromises."<sup>2</sup>

Ida listened intently. She was well aware of her husband's unwillingness to compromise even when it meant less money for the family. She knew that someday Herbert wanted his own publication and that he learned much from Macfadden's venture.

Three months passed. Shelton remained unaffected by the termination of his work on the *Graphic*. His hygienic practice grew; he was respected and admired by many clients who recovered under hygienic care. All went well until one day when Shelton was harassed again by someone who wanted to sabotage his practice. Ida was

<sup>2</sup> Herbert M. Shelton. "The End of an Era." *Dr. Shelton's Hygienic Review*, San Antonio: Dr. Shelton's Health School (September 1972): 16-17.

heartbroken to learn of her husband's third arrest for practicing medicine without a license. As Shelton wrote out a \$150 check to pay his fine Ida said to him, "You're being hounded too much. You didn't harm anyone. I cannot understand how a natural hygienist, who practices a work that is not illegal and is not the practice of medicine can be arrested. But you are. This is the second time I've made up my mind to leave New York. I don't want to live here anymore!"

Shelton looked at Walden who was asleep in the crib beside their bed and said, "An important part in this wicked scheme is the informer, who in the idiom of the underworld is called a stool pigeon. For a paltry sum he sells his soul. With a fictitious ailment he came to me pretending to be a believer in my work and then helped to ensnare me. The arrest lies far from the kind that has some legal justification. This is an entrapment preceded by coaxing, force, threats, legal chicanery, formulated by evil perpetrators."

Shelton undressed and got into bed. "Maybe it's not possible to live here anymore." He put his arm around Ida when she said, "You've been humiliated—I've been humiliated."

"Yes, I know."

"Herbert, I'll never forget the humiliation when the police handcuffed you and took us to the police station. I stood in front of you hoping no one would see you were handcuffed."

A silence ensued. Walden rustled his blanket and turned in the crib. Ida leaned back against the tall wooden headboard and thought how nice it would be if they lived near her parents in Washington, D.C. Shelton thought about the close friendship he had developed with Bernarr Macfadden while working with him the past three years.

"Herbert," Ida paused. "Should you have condemned the first drug company that opened in Delaware so . . . so blatantly?"

"Yes, There is no safety in a drug. Even the least virulent of them can be disease-producing."

"When you were arrested the second time, Governor Roosevelt said, 'Shelton can stay in jail the rest of his life! Again and again those words 'the rest of his life . . . the rest of his life . . . ' upset me.'" Ida's eyes filled with tears.

Shelton restlessly got out of bed. "I *must* continue to condemn the drug industry. A healthy society will bankrupt and destroy the drug industry. A successful drug industry will wreck health and shorten people's lives!"

Shelton straightened the blanket over his son as he exclaimed, "The medical profession and the manufacturers and distributors of

drugs will convert America into a nation of addicts!"

"Is there any future for us here?" asked Ida.

Shelton hesitated before he said, "No. Maybe we should return to Texas."

Ida smiled at the thought. She remembered how happy she had been while dating Herbert when he was stationed at Camp Travis.

"I'll need a place where fasters can stay overnight. A place where they will receive twenty-four-hour-a-day care. We can open a health school where the air will be fresh and clean. . . . where fresh fruits and vegetables are plentiful."

He looked at Ida and smiled. "San Antonio?" he asked.

"Yes! We'll have a place with more sunshine than rain. Bernarr and Walden can grow up in the country just as you and I did," Ida answered with much relief as she hugged Herbert.

In July 1928, Ida, Herbert, Bernarr and Walden moved to the downstairs in a two-story frame house on East Guenther Street, San Antonio, Texas—the first Dr. Shelton's Health School.

## DAILY MENUS AT THE HEALTH SCHOOL

BREAKFAST	LUNCH	DINNER
	<b>SUNDAY</b>	
Peaches Pears Apricots	Vegetable Salad Chinese Cabbage Zucchini Baked Caladium Roots	Vegetable Salad Spinach Carrots Baked Beans
	<b>MONDAY</b>	
Persimmons Grapes	Vegetable Salad Cabbage Cauliflower Yams	Vegetable Salad Brussel Sprouts Yellow Beans Pecans (unsalted)
	<b>TUESDAY</b>	
Cantalopes	Vegetable Salad Turnip Greens Okra Brown Rice	Vegetable Salad Collards Fresh Corn Avocado
	<b>WEDNESDAY</b>	
Dates Mangos Bananas	Vegetable Salad Broccoli String Beans Irish Potatoes	Vegetable Salad Okra Spinach Almonds
	<b>THURSDAY</b>	
Papaya Apples Grapes	Vegetable Salad Carrots Artichokes Steamed Caladium Roots	Vegetable Salad Chard Yellow Squash Unprocessed Cheese
	<b>FRIDAY</b>	
Oranges Berries	Vegetable Salad Green Squash Parsnips Whole Grain Bread	Vegetable Salad Red Cabbage Broccoli Sunflower Seeds
	<b>SATURDAY</b>	
Grapefruit Pineapple	Vegetable Salad Fresh Peas Kale Coconut	Vegetable Salad Beets Avocado Asparagus
	<b>SUNDAY</b>	
Watermelon	Vegetable Salad String Beans Vegetable Soup Potatoes	Vegetable Salad Baked Eggplant Kale Nuts

*Books, not which afford us a cowering enjoyment, but in which each thought is of unusual daring; such as an idle person cannot read, and a timid one would not be entertained by, which even make us dangerous to existing institutions—such I call good books.*

HENRY DAVID THOREAU  
American Naturalist and Author

## Part Two LIFE AT THE HEALTH SCHOOLS 1928-1940

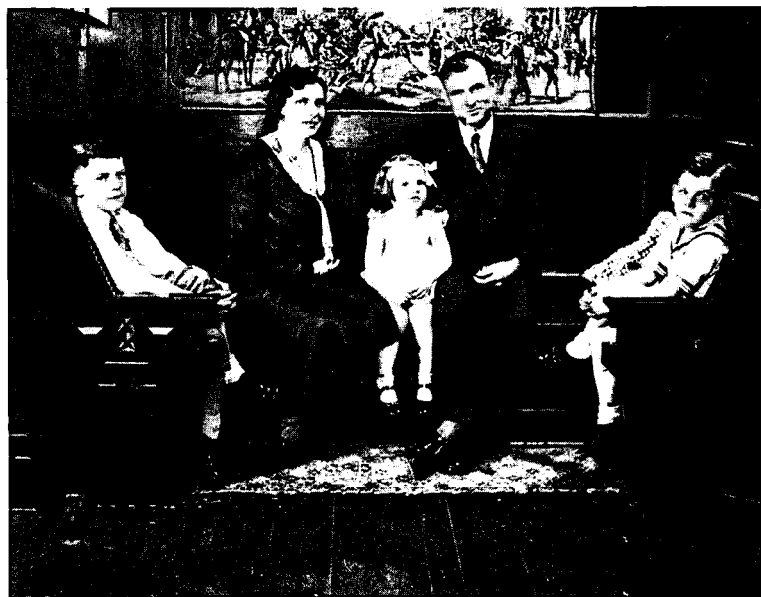


San Antonio 1930: Dr. Shelton and his daughter at the Health School.



*Dr. Shelton's first Health School was a two-story home built in 1895: The home has been restored and it is presently on exhibit in San Antonio's King William Historic District.*

*Dr. Shelton's third Health School, 603 Barbee Street, San Antonio, 1934. Shelton used this postcard of his family in his correspondence.*



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By

**Herbert M. Shelton**

**AUTHOR — TEACHER**

Founder and Director, Dr. Shelton's Health School, San Antonio, Texas; Editor, Wholesome Living; Former Health Columnist, New York Evening Graphic; Former Staff Writer, Physical Culture Magazine.

**UNION AUDITORIUM  
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New York City**

*A 1933 brochure showed Dr. Shelton's early efforts at promoting hygienic principles. It was not uncommon for Shelton to lecture for six and seven hours in one day.*

## 9

## FOUNDING THE FIRST HEALTH SCHOOL

I learned from Dr. Shelton that his school in Texas differed from the other eight fasting centers that existed in the United States in 1928. Dr. Shelton's Health School was *purely hygienic*. The fast was not assisted by any forcing measures (enemas, massages, sweat baths, etc.) At Shelton's School the emphasis was on education rather than treatment, on health rather than disease. It was not a hospital or a sanitarium but rather a "school" where health seekers could reside and learn not only how to get well but how to stay well.

Anyone who considered going to the Health School in San Antonio and requested information about Dr. Herbert M. Shelton from the Better Business Bureau received this reply: "Dr. Shelton is not a registered physician and is not a medical doctor. Records do not show him to be a graduate of any medical school or a member of any national state or local medical society."<sup>1</sup>

Shelton was proud of the information given to inquirers by the Better Business Bureau because he strongly believed that if there were less drug-giving physicians in the world, the health of humankind would be infinitely better.

The doors of the Health School opened to accommodate twelve health seekers during a very prosperous time in the United States. The output of the economy had increased by more than 50 percent since World War I. Transportation had improved dramatically. Eight years before, Studebaker had stopped making horse drawn carriages. The automobile was now the people's first choice. Not only was the Model T Ford popular, but so also was Charles Lindbergh, who in the "Spirit of St. Louis" had made his world-famous flight from New York City to Paris in 1927.

Building construction was at its peak. Numerous tall and large buildings had gone up in the downtown sections of the mid-continent cities during the years of 1921-1928. But it became increasingly evident that prosperity could not last. The country was heading into trouble. And almost no steps were being taken to arrest the tendencies which were obviously leading and finally did lead to the great depression.

<sup>1</sup> Herbert M. Shelton. "Better Business for Whom?" Dr. Shelton's *Hygienic Review*, San Antonio: Dr. Shelton's Health School (August 1942): 281.

Before the disastrous crash of the country's economy, however, and besides the opening of Dr. Shelton's Health School, another significant event had occurred in Shelton's life. The year 1928 brought the publication of his sixth book, *Human Life: Its Philosophy and Laws*. His self-published 400,000 word manuscript (which was printed in New York City) was sold at his health school. The book was also distributed in colleges of naturopathy throughout the country. Shelton had worked for approximately four years on this book which is considered one of his most ambitious works. Excerpts from *Human Life: Its Philosophy and Laws* illustrate the revolutionary ideas preoccupying Shelton in the mid-1920's:

Perhaps nowhere else is a revolution in our thinking more necessary than in our manner of viewing health and disease. Yet, so prone are men and women to regard their own ingrained prejudices as established first principles, that it is difficult to attack and expose old errors without offending those who hold to these. For, men and women usually regard an attack upon their inherited beliefs and prepossessions as an attack upon their persons. The lapse of time invests old ideas with authority and sanctity and history reveals that but few ever escape from the tyranny of these.

To primitive men and women disease was an entity—an unseen evil spirit which attacked them to maim and destroy. They feared it. They surrounded suffering and pain with a psychology of fear, dread, apprehension and awe. They did not understand it so they attempted to combat and destroy it. They knew nothing of the protecting influence of discomfort and pain and, even yet, there are few who are capable of understanding the language of their sensations. They still either ignore them until a formidable and recognizable pathological state has been developed or else they seek to combat or suppress them. For, we still regard disease in the same light with which the "cave people" viewed it.<sup>2</sup>

Dr. Shelton told me that in this book he stressed the need to view disease not as a specific entity but as a total condition. Fasting, as discovered, is the safest and the most effective means to revitalize the total condition of the body because each and every organ is given an opportunity to rest. To view disease in separate parts, he said, is an error which opens the way to serious misjudgements.

<sup>2</sup> Herbert M. Shelton. *Human Life: Its Philosophy and Laws*. Oklahoma City: How to Live Publishing Co., 1928: v-vi. Upon mutual agreement between Shelton and Oswald, the words "and women" were added to this quote, 12 July 83.



Shelton's volume outlined the reasons why the body should be given a period of rest. It also contained concepts on the cause and development of disease, the unity of disease, the delusion of cures, and the need for employing hygienic care of disease. To substantiate the employment of hygienic care, Shelton stated and explicated the following laws:

### TEN LAWS OF LIFE

#### 1. *Life's Great Law*

Every particle of living matter in the body is endowed with an instinct of self-preservation, sustained by an inherent force in the organism called vital force or life force. The success of each particle's work is directly proportioned to the amount of the force and inversely to the degree of its activity.

#### 2. *The Law of Action*

Whenever action occurs in the living organism, as the result of extraneous influences, the action must be ascribed to the living thing which has the power of action, and not to the dead whose leading characteristic is inertia.

#### 3. *The Law of Power*

The power employed, and consequently expended, in any vital or medicinal action is vital power, that is, power from within and not from without.

#### 4. *The Law of Distribution*

The power of the body, whether more or less, is distributed in a manner proportionate to the importance and needs of the various organs and tissues of the body.

#### 5. *The Law of Dual Effect*

The secondary effect upon the living organism of any act, habit, indulgence or agent is the exact opposite and equal to the primary effect.

#### 6. *The Law of Limitation*

Whenever and wherever the expenditure of vital power had advanced so far that a fatal exhaustion is imminent, a check is put upon the unnecessary expenditure of power and the organism rebels against the further use of even an accustomed stimulant.

#### 7. *The Law of Special Economy*

The vital organism under favorable conditions stores up all excess of vital funds above the current expenditures as a reserve fund to be employed in time of special need.

#### 8. *The Law of Vital Accommodation*

##### *--Nature's Balance Wheel--*

The response of the vital organism to external stimuli is an instinctive one, based upon a self-preserved instinct which

adapts itself to whatever influence it cannot destroy or control.

#### 9. *The Law of Stimulation*

Whenever any toxic or irritating agent is brought to bear upon the living organism this action occasions vital resistance which manifests itself in an action at once accelerated and impaired. This resistance diminishes the power of action precisely to the degree to which it accelerates action. The increased action is caused by the extra expenditure of vital power called out, not supplied, by the compulsory process. In consequence, the available supply of power is diminished by this amount.

#### 10. *The Law of Repose*

Whenever action in the body has expended the substance and available energy of the body, rest is induced in order to replenish the body's substance and energy.

When discussing these laws of life Shelton never portrayed himself demagogically as their founder or father. He justly gave credit to Sylvester Graham and to the medical doctors Trall, Jennings, Walker and Page, as well as to other pioneer hygienists who had influenced his work. Shelton's role consisted of systematizing the knowledge gained from the study of his predecessors' theories.

He ended this monumental book with the following statements:

The truth should be self-evident that any method or system that destroys the independence and autonomy of the individual and makes one forever dependent upon another person or class of people is not natural. Any system that of itself creates a privileged class who can, by law, or otherwise, lord it over their fellow people destroys true freedom and personal autonomy. Any system that teaches the sick that they can get well only through the exercise of the skill of someone else, or through the operation of something else, and that they remain alive only through the tender mercies of the privileged class, has no place in Nature's scheme of things, and the sooner it is abolished, the better will humankind be. It was no more a part of the original scheme of things that people should be a supplicate at the feet of the healers than that lions or cod-fish should be. It matters not whether a person is dependent on the physician, the osteopath, the chiropractor or the psycho-analyst, that person is a slave to that class upon which one depends. Therapeutics makes slaves of men and women. This is an evil and cannot endure.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Herbert M. Shelton. *Human Life: Its Philosophy and Laws*. Oklahoma City: How to Live Publishing Co., 1928: 518. The excerpt has been reproduced in part.

Shelton's book emphasized his disapproval of doctors who acted as gods and expected those seeking their help to become dependent upon them. He used this volume to teach his belief that *health care was self-care*. The book became his tool to educate his guests at his school to live life free from commercialized programs of care.

☞ Herbert Shelton remembered a visit from his father that occurred one day in 1928, shortly after the School had opened. Mitch, with two of Shelton's brothers, came from Greenville to celebrate his Texas homecoming. Shelton enjoyed taking twelve-year-old Sam and nine-year-old Gene for a ride in Mitch's sleek Model T Ford, particularly since he himself did not own a car.<sup>4</sup> Mitch talked about the whereabouts of Shelton's brothers and sisters. Seventeen-year-old Grace and Shelton's youngest sister, eleven-year-old Juanita, were at home with Fanny in Greenville. May (age thirty-one) was married and living in Waco, Texas. Roy (twenty-nine) was working as a carpenter in Greenville. Willie (twenty-five) was living in New York City where she worked as a sales clerk. Zack (nineteen) was preparing himself to attend an optometry school in Waco, Texas.

Mitch told his son that his contracting work was as busy as ever. His life had not changed; however, his attitude toward the idea of fasting for health had. Mitch was now not skeptical about his son's choice of profession, mostly because all of his conventional treatments had not helped him overcome his asthmatic condition. Mitch made arrangements to fast two weeks at the Health School in January 1929. Thereafter, at the age of sixty-one, Mitch began to adopt a more hygienic lifestyle.

By December of 1929 Ida neared the time for delivery of her third child. Herbert could think of no sound reason why Ida should go to a hospital to deliver; he could think of many reasons why she should not. Many physicians did not want to take the time to permit a baby to be born without interference. If a son were born, he would avoid the routine hospital circumcision. Shelton believed reasons given for circumcision were false. Every rare condition this procedure claimed to remedy (such as adherent prepuce, a too-small opening) could be corrected by better methods.

Shelton told his wife, "Like war, medicine becomes more dangerous as its science and arts advance. War, like our hospitals, gets bigger and better than the one before it. Rather than take you to

<sup>4</sup> Shelton was first able to afford to buy a car in 1933. He bought a slate grey Whippet.

a hospital, I'll call the obstetrician and he can come here with a nurse. Our baby can be born at home."

On December 10th Shelton called the obstetrician when he thought the baby would soon be on its way. When he arrived the obstetrician disagreed with this assessment. While he and the nurse were talking in the kitchen, Shelton delivered a blue-eyed, blonde haired daughter. Herbert and Ida named her Willowdeen after a leading character in a movie they had seen together.

Within a few weeks after Willowdeen's birth, Shelton had already become a doting father to his daughter who had arrived during a financially insecure period in his life. Shelton, along with the rest of the people in the United States, slipped from the twenties that "roared" into the depression-scarred thirties.

Willowdeen entered the world the year of the Wall Street crash. The stock market and investment-trust stocks collapsed. Billions of dollars were lost and many investors were totally ruined. In one day U.S. Steel lost 171½, Westinghouse 34½, General Electric 47½ and industrial stocks plummeted 43 points.

The backbone of the prosperity of the 1920's were the automobile and the construction industries. Residential construction, which had stood at five billion dollars in 1925, was down to three billion. By 1929 the automobile industry and its satellite businesses were seriously overstocked. The depression began to affect every area of American life.

Shelton was having a difficult time making the monthly payment on his health school. Occasionally when his guests paid by check, the check was useless. At other times during the depression, while six million people in the United States were out of work, it was not uncommon for Shelton to permit his ailing guests to remain under his care at his health school, even though he knew they had no money to pay him. In fact, Shelton refused to accept money from a number of health seekers who were not making progress under his care.<sup>5</sup>

For example, in 1930, a thirty-eight-year-old man named Juan Villa came to the School suffering with a hernia. Villa doubted that Shelton could do anything for his hernia without an operation. Shelton offered to care for him for three months. If at the end of that time Villa was satisfied with his health, he was to pay a certain fee; if not, he owed Shelton nothing. Shelton believed in a code of ethics that agreed to refund fees if a health seeker did not recover.

Before the three months had passed, Villa recovered, and he

<sup>5</sup> Correspondence from Dr. Herbert Shelton to Dr. Jack Mega, 23 October 1957.

gladly paid Shelton. Villa was dumbfounded, amazed, and grateful for his experiences under hygienic care.

Marilyn Sands was another client who agreed to pay Shelton nothing until recovery was achieved. Sands, age thirty-two, had been diagnosed as having a uterine fibroid the size of a medium grapefruit. Two physicians had recommended that Sands have a hysterectomy. After a twenty-eight day fast, the fibroid was gone. Sands left the Health School happy to pay Dr. Shelton his well earned fee.

A third case involved twenty-six-year-old Anthony Lagatta who had suffered with asthma for twenty years. Lagatta had tried unsuccessfully all of the treatments available to relieve him of his troubles. Year after year he became worse. If fasting would be of benefit to him, he agreed to pay Shelton after his fast. But Lagatta decided to pay Shelton already on the twentieth day of his thirty-day fast. Fasting for health had given him better results than anything else he had tried. Lagatta made a remarkable recovery and maintained a hygienic lifestyle for continued health.

In addition to caring for his guests at his school Shelton worked on his books. He wrote his ninth book, *The Hygienic Care of Children*, in five months. Ida typed the 190,000 word manuscript which was published by Dr. Shelton's Health School in 1931. The book's dedication reads: "To my first daughter, Willowdeen La Verne Shelton, whose rugged health, sunny disposition and unusual strength are due to the principles laid down in these pages, this book is lovingly dedicated by — The Author"

The book served to teach parents about the dangerous practices and social customs which harm, cripple and sometimes kill their offspring. Shelton believed that parental mistakes were often the cause of many children's diseases.

In this book Dr. Shelton urged mothers to nurse their babies:

Mothers should bear in mind that the milk of each species is perfectly adapted to the needs of its own young and to the needs of the young of no other species. This is as true of the milk of the human mother as that of the animal mother. Non-specific milk, that is, the milk of another species, is not only not as well adapted to meet the needs of the human infant as is that of the human mother, but it may prove to be actually harmful. The nutritive needs of the young of various species vary greatly as their rates of growth vary. The rate of growth determines the food needs of the young and the correlations of the various food factors required.

The composition of mother's milk is adjusted, as the weeks pass, to meet the changing nutritive needs of the growing baby;

this, the maker of formulas cannot hope to do. Even the volume of milk production is not uniform throughout the period of lactation. It normally varies with the changing needs of the baby.

The composition of human milk is very much the same throughout the whole of the nursing period. The greatest variation is in its protein content which diminishes as time passes; however, the composition of the milk varies from day to day and even from one feeding to the next, as well as from the beginning to the end of each nursing. Human milk, on an average, contains about 7 percent milk-sugar, 3 to 4 percent fat, 1.50 percent protein, and 0.20 percent of salts. The percentage of whey or soluble proteins in human milk is much greater than in cow's milk. Its salts are in a form much more easily utilized by the baby than are those of cow's milk.<sup>6</sup>

The book covered prenatal care, the mother's diet, the baby's growth and development, and hygienic care for nearly every type of common disease in infants and children. Shelton described his book as "not a see-your-doctor book." It was not written to encourage frequent visits to the doctor. His goal was to give sound instruction in how to prevent sickness in children. He realized that a sickly child was a constant source of anxiety, worry, apprehension, trouble and expense.

During periods when Shelton was not working on his books he accepted invitations to lecture on the topic of Natural Hygiene at various colleges in Texas. At other times Shelton himself arranged lectures at hotels in Texas to promote his health school and the principles of Natural Hygiene. Sometimes he drew as many as three hundred people at one lecture. Shelton's various lectures were attended mainly by laypeople. Occasionally a few chiropractors, osteopaths and naturopaths would attend; once in awhile a physician or two would appear in the audience.

The people were generally enthusiastic, sympathetic, and appreciative. Many of them had experienced poor results from medical treatment or had been permanently injured by "medical bungling," as Shelton described it. Some had been declared "incurable" cases. These desperately desired to learn of hygienic principles, if for no other reason than as a last hope. They began to depend upon Shelton's instruction in how to care for themselves. His lack of interest in commercialism and big business drew their

<sup>6</sup> Herbert M. Shelton. *Hygienic Care of Children*. San Antonio: Dr. Shelton's Health School, 1931: 158-160.

admiration.

Shelton always stayed after the lecture to answer questions. He displayed integrity when on occasion he would answer with the words, "I don't know." He did not leave a lecture until the many people who surrounded him had gone home. He talked with everyone although this activity often kept him up many hours later than was appropriate for a hygienist.

It was not long before Shelton's nine books and articles gained popularity in Texas just as they had in New York. People began to tell others about the unconventional little health school in San Antonio. They helped to spread the words "Health by healthful living." Many became eager disciples of this prophetic teacher. Health seekers were now traveling from outside the state of Texas to fast under Shelton's supervision, to regain their health, and to learn the principles of Natural Hygiene.

## 10

### BARELY MAKING A LIVING

The year 1932 brought the election of Franklin D. Roosevelt. Ida Shelton was not particularly pleased that Roosevelt, the former Governor of New York, had become President because she remembered him saying, 'Shelton can stay in jail the rest of his life.' Shelton attempted to offer some comfort. His comment was, "General Motors, General Mills, General Foods, General Ignorance, General Apathy and General Cussedness elect Presidents and Congressmen and maintain them in power." Shelton's remark typified his contempt for mass thought.

Roosevelt inherited from the Hoover administration the height of the depression. In the three years after the market crash an average of 100,000 workers had been laid off weekly. 660,000 were jobless in Chicago, a million in New York City. In Cleveland 50 percent were jobless, in Toledo 80 percent. People were unable to pay rent or meet mortgage payments, and many were dispossessed of their homes. Some families were living in crude shelters made of packing crates. Others huddled in shutdown factories or in empty freight cars. Broadway's theater lights were darkened, and the elevators at the Empire State Building stopped running from the 42nd to the 67th floor, as businesses failed and offices stood empty.

Farmers had been especially devastated by the depression because of the drastic reduction of foreign trade. American foreign trade declined from ten billion dollars in 1929 to three billion dollars in 1932. Gross farm income fell from twelve billion to the all-time low of five billion.<sup>1</sup>

What saved one business in the middle of the depression was the rapidly growing popularity of the movie star Mae West. The Mae West picture *She Done Him Wrong* saved Paramount Studios at a time when they had considered selling out to M.G.M. and converting their theaters into office buildings. Mae West kept the crowds coming and the censors raging.

Shelton, too, needed someone or something to save him from closing the doors of his health school. One day he thought he had the answer when he received an unexpected job offer. Dr. H.F. Harvard, editor of a health magazine, asked him to consider being the master of ceremonies for a New York City radio station with more than one million listeners. Harvard requested a recording of Shelton's voice.

"You won't have to sell anything. Commercials are handled by a separate department," he was told.

Shelton was definitely interested, then even excited when the station approved his speaking voice.

Upon request, he took a train to New York City to sign a \$60,000 yearly contract.

On arrival Shelton met an old friend, Mario Paulinos, a member of the advertising staff, who was surprised to see him.

"Didn't you receive my letter, Herb? I wrote and said, 'Don't come.'"

"No, I didn't. Why?"

"I know you well. You won't advertise a product you don't believe in."

Shelton went to see Harvard. For three days they argued over the contract. At the end of the radio show, Shelton was supposed to make a statement confirming his approval of a particular laxative.

"Poisons have no place in normal metabolism," Shelton insisted. "Under no circumstance are they helpful or productive of good results."

Harvard threw up his hands.

Shelton continued. "Taking a laxative weakens the bowels. It

<sup>1</sup> William E. Leughtenburg. *The Perils of Prosperity 1914-1932*. Chicago: The Chicago University Press, 1958: 249.

eliminates no cause of the problem. A person will still suffer from constipation.”

On the fourth day they had not reached an agreement. Shelton refused the job offer and returned to San Antonio.<sup>2</sup>

Although Shelton did not earn one-eighth of the salary he had been offered, he and Ida were able to make ends meet from the income at the Health School and from the sales of his hygienic books. Shelton was fortunate to have Ida at his side who worked hard to help maintain the School. Ida did the laundry for the guests and prepared their meals; she even cut the lawn while Herbert studied. Ida also took care of the three children while Herbert began to write two hygienic volumes—one on fasting and the other on body care. He also spent time seeking ways to better publicize his little health school on East Guenther Street. One of the best ways, he discovered, was to arrange for lectures on Natural Hygiene in other cities.

In the fall of 1932, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Shelton delivered a series of lectures on fasting and other principles of Natural Hygiene. He condemned the practice of circumcision and the increasing trend toward tonsillectomies. He attempted to persuade his listeners to avoid the danger of drug dependency. The lectures were particularly well received. The number of people in attendance reached nearly four hundred.

At one of the lectures Shelton warned women to be leery of the growing popularity of the hysterectomy.

“Surgeons can cut out everything except cause—this they neither know, nor regard. Surgery is merely part of that gigantic system that proudly styles itself ‘Modern Scientific Medicine.’ The physicians put on a show of science with their laboratories, their tests, their diagnostic tools and their reports in a technical verbiage that is unintelligible to the layperson. But, with all their science, often they fail to discover *cause* and a knowledge of *cause* is the thing most needed!”

At another lecture, Shelton encouraged his listeners to adopt a hygienic lifestyle. He told them how to best care for their bodies. He spoke of the importance of exercise. “Invalids often need as much exercise as the healthy!” exclaimed Shelton. “Circulation of blood and lymph constitutes the grand vital process by which food materials are floated to cells and tissues. Waste is then carried to excretory organs. This circulation depends, for its highest efficiency,

<sup>2</sup> Tosca Haag and Dr. Vivian V. Vetrano. “A Tribute to Herbert M. Shelton.” *Dr. Shelton's Hygienic Review*, San Antonio: Dr. Shelton's Health School (October 1977): 30.

upon muscular activity. There are no less than 400 muscles in the body, each of them in need of regular exercise. Unused muscles waste and weaken. Without regular exercise, all functions which depend upon the actions of the muscles also greatly weaken. Each part of the body is linked in its actions and correlations to the rest. Nowhere is this interlinking of function with function more apparent than in the increased action of the circulatory system that occurs when muscular action is increased. The effects of exercise are not linked to the organs of motion, but extend to the entire organism.”

Shelton instructed his listeners to regard sleep and rest as important as vigorous exercise. He said: “Rest and sleep are periods of active repair, replenishment and recuperation. Periods of vigorous activity would be impossible without the preparatory work of those of passivity. Sleep should be our favorite form of recreation—of creating anew. Nothing is so restorative to the nerves as sound and uninterrupted sleep. Time stolen from sleep is not gain but loss. To attempt to lengthen the day by shortening the hours of sleep is a great mistake.

“Those who disregard Nature's calls for rest, and go on in spite of it, are overworked. Another form of overwork is that of keeping the body or parts of it tense. To be constantly tensed in body and perhaps in mind as well, constitutes a ceaseless drain upon your nervous system. It's often largely responsible for the troubles for which people run to doctors. Some people are so tense and nervous that they do not fully relax when they go to sleep. As a consequence they do not awake refreshed in the morning. The body does not circulate freely through tensed muscles. The processes of tissue repair are impaired. Waste matter is not carried away as rapidly as it should be. Poor health is the final result.”

“Life should be built on the conservation of energy, *not its dissipation*,” warned Shelton.

“Learn to maintain a serene and poised mental attitude. Don't harbor self-pity, resentment or anger. Overcome fear. It is the most destructive of all emotions. It numbs and paralyzes the body and wastes nerve energy as few others do. Fear greatly affects the heart. The stomach ceases to function under fear. Note the dryness of the mouth, because of suspended salivary secretion, in fear. It does little good to eat a perfect diet if our mental state is such as to impair and prevent digestion.

“Joy and happiness are essential to health. Contentment and cheer should be cultivated with as much care and persistency as the gardener exercises in the cultivation of his plants,” said Shelton.

"Self-control is the great law of mental Hygiene. Be of good courage. Cast worry aside. Learn to love your neighbor. Dismiss your troubles and think upon the better things of life. By so doing your health will be improved and your life prolonged!"

After the lecture, members of the audience asked questions about fasting and about Shelton's mode of care.

"Do you give any treatments at your school?" asked a man sitting in the front row.

"No . . . none. A hygienist is a guide, a teacher. I'm not a treatment peddler. I do not treat symptoms. That is not Natural Hygiene. We always first look for the cause. Removing cause is not always the same in each case because causes are not the same."

"Dr. Shelton, does fasting cure disease?" asked a woman.

"I do not say that fasting cures anything. The hygienist does not use the word *cure*. Fasting is a physiological rest where one drinks only distilled water. It enables the body to do for itself many things that it cannot do under a state of repletion. Fasting is the best, shortest, sharpest and fastest way to rid the body of toxins. At my health school people are freed of their toxic load during the fast. Afterward they are given nourishing food to eat."

A woman in the audience stood and said, "Dr. Shelton, I tried fasting once and it didn't help me. Now what do I do?"

"All I can do is to repeat that *fasting is only a part of the total hygienic way of life*. The fast permits the body to cast out its toxic wastes and to heal its structures. Since fasting is not a therapy, it takes time because the healing is carried out by the lawful and orderly processes of physiology. Many people expect too much from a fast. They expect the 'fast' to heal them. They do not understand that fasting is a rest which permits the body to institute its healing processes. It's the living organism which heals and not the fast. The fast provides the conditions for healing. Many people think that a fast of seven days will permit the body to undo all the pathology that has developed over a lifetime. They aren't willing to take another fast, nor are they willing to eat properly and live hygienically between fasts, if they need a series of fasts. Health comes to those people who work to achieve it. One can carry out the proper way of life or stay sick. This is Nature's dictates, not the hygienist's or any one person's laws." Shelton concluded his discussion by saying, "If you aren't willing to cease bad habits and other causes of disease and supply the conditions of health for a sufficiently long period of time to evolve into good health, then please . . . do not expect to be healthy."

A gentleman who did not understand the toxemia theory said, "I read there can't be toxemia in the stomach or in one cavity in the body. There is not toxemia in the esophagus, stomach, or intestine. Is that correct?"

"Yes. Toxemia is a condition of the blood. It is impossible for toxemia to develop so long as we have normal elimination. Toxemia is the result of inhibited elimination. No toxemic state is ever fully eliminated until the individual has been educated into an understanding of his trouble and has been educated out of all of his enervating habits."

"Dr. Shelton, I'm tired all the time . . . even when I awake in the morning. Does this mean my system is toxic?"

"Yes, it may be so. Low energy is the result of toxic saturation of the bloodstream and tissues at the cellular level. If the toxic overload is not halted and reversed, intoxication continues, progressing through seven stages. Although not every disease follows each stage, all diseases are an orderly progression from low energy levels to pathological degeneration. The first stage is *enervation*. Nerve energy is reduced and normal bodily functions are impaired, especially the process of elimination. The second stage is *toxemia*. Nerve energy is too low to eliminate metabolic wastes and exogenous toxins. These toxic substances begin to saturate first the blood stream and cells. The third stage is *irritation*. A toxic build-up within the tissues results in irritability, queasiness or fatigue. Stage four is *inflammation*. Toxicants have amassed and become inflamed. Every part of the body when irritated, gives rise to its own symptom-complex, or what is known as a special disease. The disease can be named because of its location and different tissues involved. Most disease comes from a common source. They are the effects of accumulated waste products of metabolism. They are symptom-complexes of a constitutional toxemic state. *Ulceration* is the next stage where tissues are destroyed. The body ulcerates and forms an outlet for toxic build-up. In the next stage called *induration*, ulcerated tissue hardens or scars. In the final stage called *chronic degeneration*, cellular integrity is destroyed through disorganization or proliferation. Failure of vital organs results in death. Those who understand this orderly progression into sickness can reverse the process provided an irreversible stage has not been reached . . . Next question . . ."

"What kind of food do you serve at your health school?"

"My guests eat wholesome, nourishing food that consists of fresh fruits, fresh vegetables, unsalted and unroasted nuts and unpro-

cessed cheese. You don't get vitamins out of white flour, white rice, white sugar and other denatured foods. I don't serve canned goods. I don't use that kind of conventional diet at my school. Someday I hope the value of proper nutrition will be recognized and appreciated."

"Then I can assume you do not serve coffee?"

"Right. Hygienists do not drink coffee. Therefore, they escape the coffee-induced headaches and the coffee-caused mutations of the genes. They escape all the evils of addiction."

"Is smoking not allowed at your school?"

"Absolutely not. If people do not smoke, they may escape the tobacco-induced cancer of the lungs, heart disease and blindness caused by tobacco. They may also escape Buerger's disease or they may escape impotency . . . We must stop doing the things that make us ill and we will start getting better!"

During the question and answer period at the lecture in Milwaukee a newcomer arrived and sat in the audience. He had been paid to simulate an illness and ask Shelton's advice about it. Police officers were waiting outside. The paid faker told the officers Shelton was practicing medicine without a license.

Shelton was promptly escorted to the Milwaukee County Jail.

Although Shelton prescribed no medicine to the faker, Shelton was once again charged with practicing medicine without a license. Fortunately, Milwaukee's understanding Judge Page had a doctorate in naturopathy. In part because of this Shelton remained at the jail for only three hours before his release. He was fined \$125 that day in 1932.<sup>3</sup>

☞ The year 1933 saw the worldwide emergence of Adolf Hitler. He was slightly beyond "middle age" when he came to power. Shelton described the German dictator as "no hairy chested he-man" but rather one who was "nervous, emotional, irritable, explosive, and constantly ailing." In his speeches, or "screeches" as Shelton called them, Hitler's voice would often grow weak. It was throat trouble rather than emotion that muffled his voice. A throat operation was performed on him in 1933. His physicians removed a growth on his left vocal cord. Afterward, Hitler was never entirely well, yet rarely so ill as to be bedfast.

Shelton pointed out that for "a man who made war upon what he called 'Jewish medicine' (Hitler's term), he took surprising amounts

of the concoctions of the pharmaceutical chemists." Shelton believed Hitler permitted himself to be used as a veritable guinea pig. He absorbed medicine in almost every way known—intramuscularly, intravenously, orally and through enemas.<sup>4</sup>

"The so-called civilized world is full of people who keep their tissues constantly pickled in drugs," said Shelton. "They absorb as many poisonous concoctions as they can without dying outright. Without such people, the physicians, drug stores, and patent medicine concerns would be forced to go out of business. But Hitler seems to have had all of these people outdistanced in the race to see who could absorb the most poison."

While at home with his wife one afternoon, Shelton discussed his interest in Adolf Hitler's physical condition. He said, "Hitler's drug intake ranges all the way from Orchikin, a combination of 'hormones' extracted from young bulls, to anti-gas pills."

But Ida was not interested. She had just come inside from hanging the laundry and felt tired. Ida also felt sad because her wedding ring was missing. She had put the ring on top of her dresser and it had disappeared. She suspected that one of the fourteen guests had taken it from her. Just then, Ida and Herbert saw that the clothes lines had broken and Ida knew that the sheets would have to be washed again.

Ida was growing tired of all the hard work. She wished she were able to go out somewhere, anywhere, with Herbert. But they could not. They had no extra money. And if they did go out, just to buy food, it was always separately.<sup>5</sup>

Ida was also worn by the move from the second health school to the third on Barbee Street, San Antonio. Ida and Herbert discussed the idea that their health school should be separate from their residence. There was little room for the children to play, and it was difficult keeping them quiet while the guests fasted. Herbert planned to carry out this idea of a separate family residence because he was concerned for his wife's happiness. He was also troubled by Ida's declining interest in following the hygienic diet. Herbert noticed that Ida was growing tired of being in the public's eye and that she clearly desired a more private life. He hoped Ida would be happier living in a home away from the School.

As Ida returned to finish the laundry for the family and the guests

<sup>4</sup> Herbert M. Shelton. "A Picture of a Madman." *Dr. Shelton's Hygienic Review*, San Antonio: Dr. Shelton's Health School (May 1947): 201-202.

<sup>5</sup> Discussion between Ida Shelton and Jean Oswald, 30 June 1981.

<sup>3</sup> Correspondence from Dr. Herbert Shelton to Jean Oswald, 9 September 1982.

at the Health School, Herbert resumed his own task of improving family finances by service in his chosen field. He was working steadily on what was called *The Hygienic System*, a series of seven hygienic volumes.

## 11

### PRESENTING THE HYGIENIC VOLUMES

I travelled frequently between Milwaukee and San Antonio to meet with Dr. Shelton. His life, his teachings, his profound knowledge of the philosophy and science of Natural Hygiene had inspired me to continue work on his life's story. He liked to reminisce; I was an ardent listener.

Dr. Shelton explained to me how he had produced his seven-volume series published under the collective title *The Hygienic System*. Russell Trall's earlier work on developing a hygienic system influenced Shelton, and he perpetuated Trall's work in producing his seven-volume work. Each volume covered a different facet of Hygiene. The first volume, printed in 1934, was not volume one but volume three because of Shelton's enthusiastic interest in the subject of volume three. This 170,000 word book entitled *Orthotrophy* discussed the subject of fasting as the primary step in the recovery of health.

Volume three explained the chemical and organic changes that take place during a fast in the blood, skin, bones, teeth, brain, nervous system, lungs, muscles, heart, pancreas, spleen and stomach. It considered the influence of fasting on growth and regeneration and on the organs and tissues repairing of themselves during a fast. I found this significant list in Chapter XX "Objections to the Fast":

Fasting does not cause the stomach to "shrink up"—atrophy.  
 Fasting does not cause the walls of the stomach to grow together—adhere.  
 Fasting does not cause the digestive fluids of the stomach to turn upon it and digest the stomach.  
 Fasting does not paralyze the bowels.  
 Fasting does not impoverish the blood nor produce anemia.  
 Fasting does not produce acidosis.

Fasting does not cause the heart to weaken nor to collapse.  
 Fasting does not produce malnutritional edema.  
 Fasting does not cause deficiency disease.  
 Fasting does not produce tuberculosis nor predispose to its development.  
 Fasting does not reduce resistance to "disease."  
 Fasting does not injure the teeth, the body's glands, the nervous system or any of the vital organs.  
 Fasting does not weaken the vital powers.  
 Fasting does not cause abnormal psychism.<sup>1</sup>

Because many people had confused notions about fasting, Shelton found it necessary to list what he believed were fallacies concerning the fast. Hygienic scholars found this volume an invaluable tool that surpassed any college course on the subject of fasting.

The other six volumes followed in order. Volume one, *Orthobionomics*, was finished in the fall of 1934. Shelton describes why he chose the scientific term *Orthobionomics* for this thirty-four chapter volume.

Bionomy deals with the laws of life. Bionomics deals with the adaptation of organisms to their environment. Orthodox biologists make no distinction between healthful adaptation and pathological adaptation. A distinction should be made between animate and inanimate environment and between that which is friendly and sustains us, and that which is inimical and injures us. I have coined the term *Orthobionomics* to designate the correct adaptation of life and environment. Mal-bionomic adaptation is unhealthful adaptation and results in degeneration.

The body possesses the ability of adjusting itself to unnatural or anti-vital conditions, if given sufficient time. If we stick to a practice or influence long enough the very laws of Nature seem to change to fit the abnormal condition; and, although the experiment may kill a million or more people, shorten the lives of millions more and dethrone the mental and moral controls of many more, we persist in seeing the merely apparent change of laws and ignore the real damage behind the appearance.

The penalty for every violated law must be paid, and so long as we continue to violate it, just so long will nature continue to exact her price. The real penalty is the difference between what a man is and what he might have been.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Herbert M. Shelton. *The Hygienic System Orthotrophy*, vol. 3. Chicago: Natural Hygiene Press, Fifth (revised) edition, *The Science and Fine Art of Fasting* 1978: 214.

<sup>2</sup> Herbert M. Shelton. *The Hygienic System: Orthobionomics* vol. 1. San Antonio: Dr. Shelton's Health School, 1934: 41.



Volume one served as an introduction to a sane philosophy of correct living. This volume acquainted the reader with the broad principles of mental and physical Hygiene and explained the fundamentals of right living for infants, children and adults. It also indicated how to care for the various parts of the body in order to maintain these in good health. Shelton believed his work was beneficial for both the sick and the healthy.

Volume two, *Orthotrophy*, was published in June 1935. In this 250,000 word volume (which was typed by his wife) Shelton wrote about nutrition and correct food combining. He shared his research on what he believed were the myths about protein, amino acids, vitamins, and cooked foods. Shelton emphasized the dangers of salt to both humans and animals. He believed that animals acquired the habit of salt consumption just as humans do. They like it and will eat it if offered to them.

In the following excerpt Shelton writes about his experiences and experiments with salt as a boy and young man:

At my father's dairy, although the milk cows were given salt regularly in their diet, the calves were never given salt, nor were the dry cows in the pasture. The horses and mules were given salt but no salt was fed to the chickens and hogs. Our ducks and guineas were never given salt. As a boy I had a flock of pigeons which were never fed salt. We had a large pasture over which our animals grazed at will, but there were no "salt licks" thereon. The wild life on the pasture and on the wooded section did not get salt. There were no "salt licks" known to farmers and hunters in that whole region of the state. This was in North Texas. My *Health School* is in South Texas. I am unable to learn of a salt-lick anywhere in this region. The squirrels and rabbits here on the *Health School* grounds do not get salt. Neither do the quail, doves, cardinals, mocking birds, sparrows, etc., that abound here.

About 1914 I made my first experiment of withholding salt from a cow. I placed her with my father's dairy herd, every member of which was given salt regularly in her food. Every cow received salt except mine. Otherwise her feeding and care was the same as that received by the other cows. She did not lose health, there was no falling off in milk production and she developed none of the symptoms of "salt hunger" popularly supposed to result from lack of salt.

At the *Health School* a stallion and a mare were kept for more than three years without salt with no evidences of "salt hunger" or falling health. Indeed, they both maintained splendid health and great vigor.

In this next excerpt Shelton describes the time when he himself gave up eating salt. He also cites pertinent experiences of his family and clients at his school:

About 1912 I gave up the use of salt. Up to that time I had been a heavy user of salt. At first I missed it from my foods. After a time I did not relish foods in which I could detect the taste of salt. I enjoy the fine delicate flavors of the foods much more than I ever enjoyed the flavor of salt. I have never missed salt after the first weeks after giving it up. I have never had a craving for it. My health has not suffered in any manner from lack of it.

I have brought up three children without salt. Their mother did not take salt before and during pregnancy nor during lactation. These children have been reared from conception without salt. They are well developed, strong and healthy and brimming over with energy and enthusiasm. Although they were reared as vegetarians, who are supposed to need salt most of all, they have not needed salt. No harm has ever come from abstinence from this "essential of animal life."

For more than ten years I have excluded salt from the diets of my clients and have watched them get well without this supposed-to-be indispensable article of "diet." Some of these clients have not returned to the use of salt after leaving my care. Some of them have reared their children without it. Nowhere has any evidence of any harm from a lack of salt been observable.

Why, with all the historical, observational, empirical and experimental evidence that is available bearing on this subject, will people continue to declare that "salt is essential to animal life"? Why will they ignore the facts and cling to a superstition?<sup>3</sup>

Volume two not only treated what Shelton believed were superstitions concerning superior nutrition but it also considered the problem of the declining fertility of the soil. Dr. Shelton wrote: "Carelessness has caused many forest fires that have destroyed many thousands of acres of productive land. Much of the rich Everglades of Florida were destroyed by fire." He believed that every year our irrational methods of sewage disposal send millions of tons of the best top soil of the country out to sea. Year by year our land grows less and less fertile.

To offset this, we resort to commercial fertilizers that poison the plants, undecayed animal offals that sour the soil, and have

<sup>3</sup> Herbert M. Shelton. *The Hygienic System: Orthobionomics* vol. 1. San Antonio: Dr. Shelton's Health School, 1934: 204-210.

neglected the true sources of soil. Soil is disintegrated rock. From the rock and from humus or properly decomposed compost comes the finest fertilizer for our soils. "We prefer to enrich the manufacturers of chemical fertilizers," claimed Shelton.

Coupled with this diabolical agriculture, are the devastation of forests, destruction of wild life and the reckless waste of earth's mineral resources. "If this folly continues for another five hundred years the earth will have become uninhabitable," he warned.<sup>4</sup>

Shelton ended this volume by pointing out to his readers that agricultural reform was a very important part of dietary reform.

☞ One month after the publication of volume two, Shelton went to New York City to lecture on the subject of Natural Hygiene. He spoke at one of the large lecture halls at the Claridge Hotel. He had lectured nightly for a week; as many as four-hundred people attended each lecture.

Standing at the podium he told his listeners that hygienists can provide the means of reversing the downward trend in health. He added, "We will receive no help to promote Hygiene from the cities, counties, states or federal government. We will be opposed from all sides." He told them that vested interests would never surrender their advantages to their pursuit or propagation of truth. Organized opposition to whatever threatened their profits must always be expected. He said, "No matter how beneficial and wholesome a new truth may have been—it has never received the approval of public opinion when it was first announced. Always it has had to fight its way against the combined forces of ignorance, superstition and bigotry. Always those who saw their positions or their incomes threatened by the new truth were the first to raise the battle ax against it."

"The hygienic system of health care," he explained, "recognizes the essential unity of health and morbid phenomena and sees in each a lawful and orderly adjusting of the internal and external relations of the organism. All morbid action is but a modification of the normal functions and processes of the body. The physical results making up morbid structural alterations are simply the same vital process. What the hygienist terms diseases are not things different from or external to the living body, but rather particular conditions of the body, or modified phases of the vital manifestations. They are

<sup>4</sup> Herbert M. Shelton. *The Hygienic System: Orothotrophy* vol. 2. San Antonio: Dr. Shelton's Health School, 1935: 590.

essentially vital or biological. They are processes of the living organism. Fever, pain, coughing, sneezing, vomiting, diarrhea, inflammation, eruptions, night sweats and so forth are vital phenomena and demonstrate conclusively that disease has no individual factor—entities other than those that sustain life in general and in particular. The symptoms of disease depend upon the same power and functions that produce the signs of health. Health and disease are the same thing—vital action intended to preserve, maintain and protect the body. There is no more reason for treating disease than there is for treating health. The body slides easily into disease when conditions warrant and can glide back into health when conditions justify."

Shelton also taught his listeners how to eat hygienically. He warned, "The work of popularizing 'enriched' white flour is going to go full speed ahead. Super milling will scalp the life from whole wheat grain. Humans are keeping for themselves wheat's whiteness, its starch, its calories. The husk, the germ, the life are being fed to the swine!

"We must improve our modes of eating! You should know what you eat and why, how to best prepare it, when to eat, how much to eat, and how to combine foods.<sup>5</sup> You must know under what mental and physical conditions digestion will be most efficiently carried out. Develop an informed plan of eating and do not be content with the hit-and-miss plan that is the vogue. The haphazard and indiscriminate jumbling together at the same meal of foods of all kinds, the habits of eating excessively, or eating between meals when there is no demand for food, drinking with meals, result in much indigestion and discomfort. What is erroneously called 'food poisoning', this is to say, poisoning by the products of fermentation and putrefaction, results from such eating. The intelligent eater can easily avoid all this."

Shelton explained that a successful plan of eating must fit the kind and quality as well as the quantity of food to the particular need and activities of the individual at the various ages of life. "If the individual is sick, the diet must be fitted to his lowered capacities and his peculiarities. The abilities of the sick to digest and assimilate food are diminished. The sicker the person is, the less food can be utilized. If one is acutely ill, the power to utilize food is suspended. If sickness is chronic, one may be able to digest and assimilate small amounts of suitable food, but certainly cannot digest and utilize the conventional

<sup>5</sup> Read Harvey and Marilyn Diamond's *Fit For Life* (Warner Books).

diet. Many sick people quickly sense the relationship between their eating and their suffering and often make an effort to guide themselves accordingly.”

On several days Shelton lectured for as long as seven hours. The crowds kept coming back. During his last lecture of the week Shelton held his usual question and answer period. A man stood and said to Shelton, “I was diagnosed as having bursitis. I take medicine for pain but it doesn’t help me.” The man paused while Shelton explained, “Pain is a symptom of disease. The sensation or feeling is uncomfortable. Things that give pleasure can be carried far enough so that the pleasurable sensation passes into pain. Pain serves a very useful protective purpose. It is the warning voice of Nature—of Nature telling us that something is wrong or that the thing we are doing is harmful. I do not recommend taking poisons of any kind to suppress symptoms. They do not remove cause. Poisons lessen the power of the nerves to feel. Pain is Nature’s ‘thou shalt not.’ We can rightly liken the suppression of pain to muffling the alarm bells during a conflagration. And the suppression of pain not only muffles the alarm bells, it cripples the firemen!”

“I’ll make an appointment to come to your school. My name is Gary Remich and I’ll call you soon.”

Shelton acknowledged his statement by smiling and nodding, as a woman rose to say she questioned the value of the use of drugs taken to reduce a fever.

“What is fever?” she asked.

“Fever is nothing more than an increase in the ordinary temperature of the body. It serves a very definite and very necessary function—that of accelerating the activities of the cells of the body in order that they may accomplish their work more effectively. Drugs should not be used to suppress this symptom called fever. Fever is a distinctly conservative reaction and not a dangerous one.”

“What do you believe helps to promote longevity?” asked another person from the audience.

“If you want to live long, keep your tissues soft and fresh by avoiding toxemia,” answered Shelton. “Any toxin, whether formed in the body or taken in from without, is capable of bringing about a hardening process. The rapidity with which it is brought about depends upon the amount and strength of the poison and upon the resistance the system can offer to the poison. Alcohol, tobacco, tea, coffee, condiments, salt, cocoa, chocolate, as well as overeating, fear, worry, anxiety, jealousy, theft, untruthfulness, produce hardening of the tissues of the body. The hardening process that

takes place in the body as age advances seems to affect a number of people earlier than others. It is probable that there is a diathesis or tendency in such people to age early, and rapidly. As one very prominent orthopath suggests, it may be a case of the parents eating sour grapes and the children’s teeth being set on edge. Certain it is that two people living in almost the same manner will not grow old together. One will age more rapidly than the other. Those predisposed to early aging will be caused to age earlier by all kinds of stimulants and excesses.”

On this seventh day in New York City, Shelton, as usual, answered questions for over an hour. And still, a few people remained to seek additional personal help.

While Shelton was packing his books, a woman exclaimed, “I’m in so much pain! I had back surgery, but it didn’t seem to help. Can I come to your health school to fast?”

Before Shelton could answer, two New York police officers approached him from behind. The woman stood in amazement as she watched Shelton escorted outside. Shelton was taken to Rycker’s State Prison.

Once again an unidentified person had alerted the police that Shelton was lecturing and prescribing medicine. Although Shelton had clearly stated to the audience that he was not a physician and did not prescribe drugs, he was again charged with practicing medicine without a license.

“I wouldn’t practice medicine if I had a license!” Shelton proclaimed in an attempt to defend himself. But he knew his efforts were futile and he had no extra money to pay for his defense. Without benefit of a trial Shelton was declared guilty and was sentenced to thirty days imprisonment for violating the Medical Practice Act.

Shelton called his wife at his fourth health school located on South Alamo Street in San Antonio. Shelton, speaking with Ida about the verdict, quoted Ben Franklin’s famous statement: “‘Experience keeps a dear school, but fools will learn no other.’”

Shelton and his wife arranged for twenty-five-year-old William Esser, N.D., D.C., to manage the Health School which presently accommodated twenty guests. Shelton’s friend, also a graduate of Dr. Lust’s College in New York City, had recently opened a hygienic office practice in Pittsburg. Esser welcomed the opportunity to take over Shelton’s responsibilities.

When Shelton returned home, he had this to say about Rycker’s Prison: “They use barbarous methods of treating the prisoners. The

prisoners are dressed like bums, fed like pigs, and herded like cattle." He wondered how any state or nation could claim to be civilized while maintaining such prisons.

Esser stayed an additional month at Shelton's School. He enjoyed listening to Shelton read to him various philosophical excerpts. Esser was deeply impressed by Shelton's accomplishments and saw him as a great mentor offering him guidance in his own hygienic practice.<sup>6</sup>

After Esser returned to Pittsburg, not only did Dr. Shelton's Health School begin to prosper but so did the entire nation. President Roosevelt had proposed a program to reinforce "the security of the men, women and children of the nation." Through New Deal mortgage legislation many were able to keep their farms and homes. The public was thus ready to accept Roosevelt's second New Deal. Shelton, too, kept a forward-looking view toward his prospects with an ongoing hope for the wider acceptance of his work.

✪ The one-month period Shelton spent at Rycker's Prison did not interfere with his progress in producing his seven volumes. He worked on volume four during his detention, and it was published in the fall of 1935.

Volume four, *Orthokinesiology*, a 135,000-word book deals with the subject of exercise. Shelton begins his work on exercise with these words: "John Muir (1838-1914), American naturalist, is quoted as having said: 'When one tugs at a single thing in Nature, he finds it attached to everything else in the world.'" Shelton believed that nowhere else is the essential unity and interdependence of things more clearly exemplified than in the human body. He concluded: "An organism of many and diverse parts is so integrated and closely correlated, one part with the whole, and the whole with the part, that no part of the organism can be affected without it involving the whole organism in the result. The unity of the human body and the intimate interrelationships of its many parts and functions, all cooperating for the achievement of one grand end, the maintenance and perfection of life, renders it vitally important that our care of the body should include a due proportion of each and every factor necessary to the achievement of this end."<sup>7</sup>

Shelton emphasized that we must include exercise in our pattern

<sup>6</sup> Interview with Dr. William L. Esser, Lake Worth, Florida, 27 December 1985.

<sup>7</sup> Herbert M. Shelton. *The Hygienic System: Orthokinesiology* vol. 4. San Antonio: Dr. Shelton's Health School, 1935: iii.

of living and that physical culture must become a matter of concern to every man, woman and child. He believed it was almost impossible to exaggerate the value of exercise as a means of preserving or restoring health.

His thirty-six-chapter book on physical culture became one of his most popular publications. In it he answered these questions: "Are you weak; do you lack endurance; are you undeveloped; is your neck scrawny; are your legs shapeless and thin; do you have flat feet; are you round shouldered; does your abdomen protrude; are you ruptured; is the stomach fallen; is the womb misplaced?" Shelton explained which methods of exercise would remedy such deformities, and he included ninety-eight illustrations to simplify his instructions. The volume sold fifteen hundred copies within its first year of publication. By then volume five was ready for printing.

Orthogenetics was published in 1937. Fortunately volume five sold well to collectors of Shelton's work. The 275,000-word volume (also typed by Ida) broadened the scope of his previous subject matter. In this book we find such chapter titles as "Care of the Sex Organs," "The Art of Love," "Birth Control," "Illegitimate Children," and "Sex and Length of Life."

When talking about sexual function Shelton claimed that overeating, similar to using aphrodisiacs, may accelerate sex but that, like the drugs, it would ultimately weaken sexual function. Over-acceleration of any kind has this effect. He claimed that a diet of meat, eggs, chocolate and highly seasoned foods would lash the sex organs into impotency through over-acceleration.

In his chapter on "The Art of Love" Shelton answered the often asked question: "How often should sexual intercourse take place?" Shelton's opinion on the matter was that there were no given rules for love. There were no standards for males and no standards for females in the sense of sexual vigor.

In another chapter, this one called "Illegitimate Children," Shelton pointed out that illegitimate children were in no way inferior. Shelton instructed his readers that truly civilized people do not punish children for the unconventionality of their parents. He claimed that a responsible parenthood was the only moral parenthood, whether inside or outside the bonds of marriage. Shelton revealed his progressive thinking as early as 1937, when he wrote that he saw no reason why women should not be allowed to have children apart from marriage provided the children were given proper care.

Herbert Shelton said to me that he preferred volume five to any of

the others he had written. Despite his preference for this volume, he had not printed more than three thousand copies, the same number printed for the first four volumes. Fifteen hundred books sold the first year. This was also the average amount sold the first year for volumes one through four.

During the latter part of 1937 Shelton wrote the sixth volume of *The Hygienic System*. In the following excerpt Shelton indicated the necessary conditions for recovery:

The highest development of health demands an ensemble of cooperating conditions. A superior constitutional vigor correlated with good living habits means the acme of health and strength. The body must depend, not alone upon the integrity of its parts, but also upon integrity of behavior.

The true remedies restore the healthy state. Only in proportion as it cooperates with the forces of life, on whose efforts bodily restoration is dependent, is any plan of care beneficial. Agents that excite or depress nervous activity; narcotics that deprive the nerves of the power to tell us, by aching, of trouble; cathartics that lash tired, overworked bowels into vigorous and exhausting action—these are not remedies. The true anodyne (anything that lessens pain) is not the drug that all but stops nervous activity, but the process that removes the reason for the pain.<sup>8</sup>

Shelton advised his readers to adjust to the ordered harmony of Nature and not to expect Nature to adjust to their morbid desires or selfish ends. He believed that health seekers must not rely upon the current concepts of “cure” which were based upon fighting symptoms. He warned that the myriads of local treatments often lessened chances for recovery. Shelton’s overall objective in volume six was to bring self-knowledge to his readers and to teach them to guide themselves without reliance upon remedies which ignored the benefits of healthful circumstances.

Before Shelton completed the volumes in *The Hygienic System*, he wrote two separate books, *Syphilis: Werewolf of Medicine* and *The Exploitation of Human Suffering*. The importance of *The Exploitation of Human Suffering* was recognized by Christopher Gian-Cursio, N.D., D.C. Gian-Cursio not only supported Shelton’s views in this book but supported his other theories as well, after his discovery and study of Shelton’s *Human Life: Its Philosophy and*

<sup>8</sup> Herbert M. Shelton. *The Hygienic System: Orthopathy* vol. 6. San Antonio: Dr. Shelton’s Health School, 1938: 411.

*Laws*. Gian-Cursio had first familiarized himself with Shelton’s work while he was a student with William Esser at Dr. Lust’s College in New York City. Shortly after completing his college work Gian-Cursio suffered from what was medically diagnosed as an incurable heart condition. Gian-Cursio took a series of fasts, some lasting thirty days. One such fast was supervised by Dr. Shelton in 1935. His recovery verified the correctness of hygienic care and spurred on his determination to spread the words “health by healthful living.”<sup>9</sup>

By 1938 Shelton was not alone in proclaiming to the world the important hygienic principles of the past and present. Shelton was now joined by hygienic theorist Stanford Claunch from Everett, Washington. Together, Claunch, Esser and Gian-Cursio fought for those who believe in the right of American citizens to choose practitioners according to their ideas of healing.

✪ In December 1938, Shelton began work on the last volume of *The Hygienic System*. The seventh volume, *Orthopathy*, presented an in-depth approach to hygienic care for people with any of four hundred different diseases. Volume seven described the symptoms and pathology of the different diseases and the proper hygienic care of each. For example, Shelton outlined the best course to pursue in cases of snake bite, diphtheria, anemia, whooping cough, glaucoma, painful menstruation, tuberculosis and cancer. Shelton did not draw upon his own experiences alone when producing volume seven: He discussed the experiences of other fasting practitioners whose work preceded his. Shelton quoted the case of a client who fasted because of a brain tumor. The fast took place in Denver, Colorado, and was supervised by George R. Weger, M.D. Weger was a staff member at Dr. Tilden’s Health School, a fasting institution that Tilden had maintained between the years 1913-1925. Shelton quoted the following from Weger in volume seven:

A case of brain tumor came under our observation several years ago. The patient had been totally blind for about seven years. The diagnosis was first made by one of the most eminent brain specialists in this country and was confirmed at several of the most renowned American clinics where it was decided that the case was inoperable. After a prolonged fast succeeded by a very limited diet for several weeks, vision was restored and the patient was able to read the finest news print without the aid of glasses. Two years after recovery, vision remained unimpaired and no other

<sup>9</sup> Interview with Dr. Christopher Gian-Cursio, Alamo Heights, Texas, 8 July 1981.

outward symptoms have been reported. One can rely entirely upon Nature in many such cases and sometimes obtain the most startling results when all other methods of treatment have failed. It is cases such as this that justify the assumption that fasting is a therapeutic agent of the first order. Obviously, it is impossible to predict such a favorable outcome in any given case. However, the end will many times justify the means in cases that seem otherwise hopeless.<sup>10</sup>

Shelton used Weger's case to point out that brain tumors are often due to the same causes that produce tumors in other parts of the body. Injury, worry, intense and prolonged mental effort may predispose. In these cases all errors of life must be corrected. Tobacco, alcohol, tea, coffee, drugs, excessive sexual indulgence, and overeating must be given up.

In this last volume of *The Hygienic System*, Shelton offered hope also to those whose doctors had written them off as incurable. However, Shelton's reason for writing the seven volumes was not solely to offer hope to a humanity which he felt was lost in a maze of mistaken ideas.<sup>11</sup> His purpose was to proclaim that we live in an orderly universe, governed by laws that, when obeyed, insure our well-being. He presented Hygiene's seven most important facets. He emphasized that Natural Hygiene is a philosophy, based on science, and its practice—an art.

## 12

### BIRTH OF THE *REVIEW*

Shelton's confidence in his dream that one day Natural Hygiene would overpower all existing systems of health care was founded in his continued efforts to establish a monthly magazine. He fulfilled his desire to have a magazine when *Dr. Shelton's Hygienic Review* made its debut in September 1939. Shelton sustained the *Review* for the

<sup>10</sup> Herbert M. Shelton. *The Hygienic System: Orthopathy* vol. 7. San Antonio: Dr. Shelton's Health School, 1941: 466.

<sup>11</sup> Shelton's volumes in *The Hygienic System* included his impressive number of degrees: Doctor of Physiological Therapeutics, D.P., Doctor of Naturopathy, N.D., Doctor of Chiropractic, D.C., Doctor of Natural Therapeutics, D.N.T., Doctor of Naturopathic Literature, D.N. Litt., Doctor of Naturopathic Philosophy, D.N. Ph., Doctor of Philosophy, Ph.D., Doctor of Orthopathy, D. Orthp., and Doctor of Natural Science, D.N. Sc. The first five were earned degrees, and the last four were Honorary.

next forty-one years.

Shelton told me that the *Review* was his third effort to publish a magazine on his own. He had attempted to publish what he called *Wholesome Living* in 1933. The first venture failed after three months. He had tried again in 1935. This time the magazine failed after six months. During both earlier ventures Shelton could not afford to absorb the magazines' losses for any longer time.

Shelton's ideas for the monthly magazine were partially influenced by his correspondent and friend, John Tilden, M.D. Tilden, who began practicing Hygiene in 1925, had a successful monthly magazine titled *Dr. Tilden's Health Review and Critique*, published in Denver, Colorado. Shelton's publication was not a rival magazine but rather one that followed the demise of Tilden's hygienic viewpoints about health and disease. Both men believed the cause of disease was often internal, and they frequently referred to it as a predisposition. Shelton and Tilden believed the universal cause of all disease was toxemia; but the cause of this was enervation. Enervation is not disease until, from lack of energy, elimination becomes deficient; then an accumulation of waste takes place, after which outside influences join with internal causes in developing all kinds of diseases. They felt the causes of disease may be divided into three elements: first, the primary; any influence that uses up nerve energy and establishes enervation; second, enervation, which checks elimination, causing toxemia; then acid-bearing foods that fail to carry building material, which cause further toxemia; third, mind influence, which often is the greater cause.

Dr. Tilden's and Dr. Shelton's *Reviews* promoted this viewpoint and each publication assisted in familiarizing greater numbers of people with the principles of Hygiene.

Both publications shared something else in common. Each maintained a strict advertising policy. For example, Shelton wrote this in an early editorial in his *Review*: "The *Review* will accept advertising that does no violence to its principles. We will go under before we will compromise our principles and clutter up our pages with the type of advertising that appears in most "health" magazines. We will not compromise our integrity for a mere chance to go on. We did not start the *Review* to make money, but to spread health-truth."

Shelton's statements reveal that the *Review* was not a money-maker. In fact, he did not break even the first year. Fortunately, to keep the expenses low, Ida and ten-year-old Willowdeen addressed the *Reviews* and assisted in getting them to the public. Without their help, the publication would have folded as had the earlier

publications. For one dollar per year, subscribers received their money's worth at Shelton's expense.

Shelton told his readers that the neophytes in Hygiene need all the support they can get. He remarked: "The monthly visit of the *Review* to one's home should serve as a strong support. Wherever you are, you should not fail to acquaint the people with whom you come in contact, the better and more healthful way of life. Let your light shine into all the dark corners and do so without fear. All the progress the world has ever made has been made by breaking with tradition and branching out into new and untrodden fields. Humankind is subject to the law of inertia. Men and women do not progress; they are pulled along. The few drag the many along behind the chariot of progress. Every hygienist should get into the chariot as a driver!" exclaimed Shelton.

The monthly task of getting articles and persuading other writers to contribute to his publication was not easy. He was appreciative when Claunch, Esser and Gian-Cursio submitted an article. But this was infrequent, and, so that it did not look as though he was alone in his efforts, Shelton wrote under such pennames as Orphic, M.F. Guthrie (his mother), and Maverick. He did not wish to have his name dominate the pages. However, a subscriber who looked really closely at the style of writing could discover that the magazine was almost entirely written by Shelton. Only because of Shelton's profound determination did the *Review* survive its first difficult year.

☞ On September 1, 1940, the publisher of the only other hygienic magazine and the pioneer crusader for health freedom, John Tilden, M.D., died at age eighty-nine. Tilden had been the last living link with the theorists of the previous century who had seen the need for advocating "health by healthful living." Tilden had written: "Every great thought has had a precursor, every great person a predecessor." Shelton, too understood that knowledge of health had not begun with him, and therefore, would not end with him.

Prior to his death, Tilden had attempted to train a few physicians and a few osteopaths to carry on his hygienic practice. But for the most part, this attempt was unsuccessful. There was no one to publish his *Health Review and Critique*. His health school was soon converted into an apartment building. The work of the promotion of Hygiene then fell entirely on the shoulders of Shelton, Claunch, Esser and Gian-Cursio.

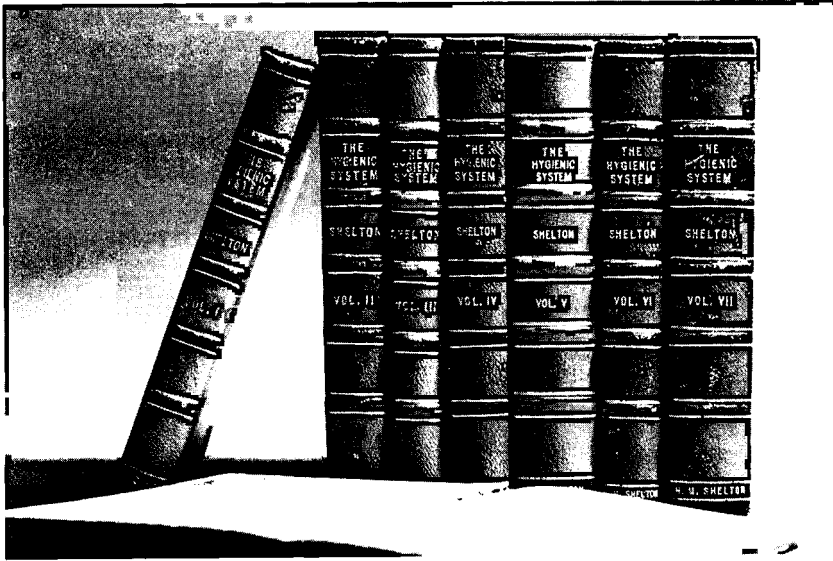
*Honest men must stand against injustice.*

HENRY DAVID THOREAU

## Part Three THE ROAD TO ACCEPTANCE 1941-1958



Above: Drawing by Mary Louise Denkus



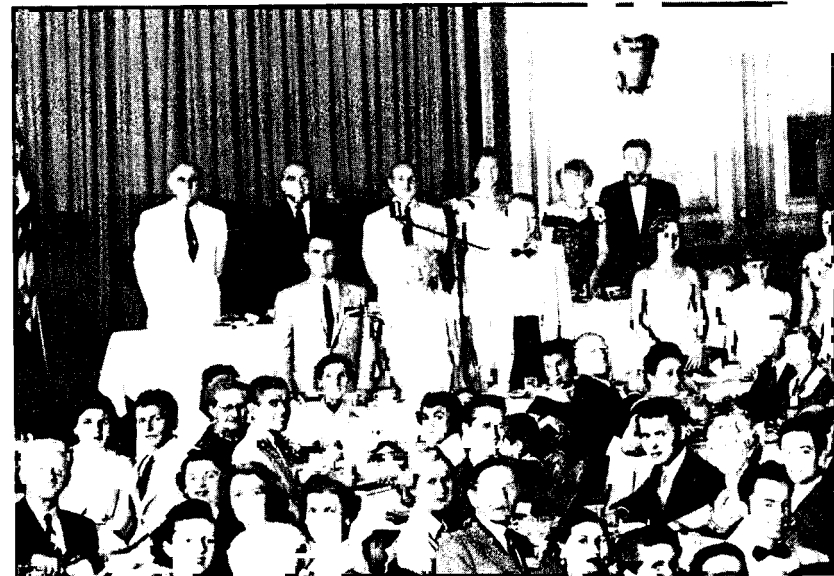
Shelton's series of volumes emphasized the need to recognize the totality of the hygienic system.

Dr. Shelton is seated at the front table to the right of his daughter, Willowdeen, at the Society Convention held in Chicago at the Hotel Morrison, June 10, 1954.



Beginning in 1939 and continuing through 1980, over 745,000 copies of Dr. Shelton's Hygienic Review were printed.

Alexandria Hotel, Los Angeles Convention, 1956: Back row from left to right—Dr. Herbert Shelton, Dr. Christopher Gian-Cursio, Jack Trop, Joy Gross, Christine and Dr. James McEachen; Front row—Dr. Gerald Benesh, Sophie Holzgreen, R.J. Cheatham, Chris, Barb and Erma Benesh.





# 13

## THE FIVE “HORSEMEN”

Shelton and his three co-workers, Doctors Claunch, Esser and Gian-Cursio were the only practicing hygienists in the United States prior to World War II. Claunch maintained a hygienic practice in Everett, Washington, while Gian-Cursio directed a health school called the “Castle of Health” in Rochester, New York. However, Claunch and Gian-Cursio had more success in their hygienic practice than did Esser, whose first health school closed down within three weeks.

Esser’s Health School had overlooked Long Island Sound in Connecticut. After he had applied for a naturopathic license to practice in Connecticut, and while he was waiting for his license to arrive, seventy-seven-year-old Veronica Rand died under his care.

Prior to undertaking Rand’s care, Esser had been reluctant to admit her to his school. She was obese and she had taken several kinds of medication during the course of many years for her arthritis. But the family pleaded and finally persuaded Esser to supervise a fast as a last resort—a last hope for recovery. On the tenth day of fasting, Rand died.

The family recognized the fact that fasting had been resorted to as an eleventh hour measure. They understood the danger was not in the fast. Rand lacked the necessary reserves as needed to repair, revive, and restore the organism toward health and healing. Because Rand had no such reserves, death was imminent before she began the fast.

Despite the family’s gratitude to Esser for his consenting to care for Rand, many outsiders did not approve of the type of care that Rand and her immediate family had chosen in her final days. Within two days after the body had arrived at the coroner’s office, five squad cars surrounded Esser’s Health School. The family had not pressed charges against Esser; the State did.

Esser was taken to jail while his wife saw to it that the eight fasters properly broke their fast before the police took them to a local hospital (Esser had delivered their second child one day before the incident). Family members of the fasters soon arrived at the hospital. After much dispute each patient demanded to be free to go home. The medical staff found the patients to be in good condition and all eight were quickly released from the hospital.

The incident received great publicity in the Connecticut and New York newspapers. Esser was charged with practicing naturopathy

without a license from the State. Esser’s attorney insisted that he plead guilty because if he did not, he might be imprisoned on a manslaughter charge. The trial resulted in a \$500 fine and the order that Esser leave the state. In compliance with the order, Esser moved to South Carolina where he obtained a naturopathic license and set up a hygienic office practice with an osteopath.<sup>1</sup> Esser was as determined as Shelton to not let the incident interfere with his desire to practice Natural Hygiene.

It was not long afterward that Shelton had four co-workers instead of three. In 1941, Gerald Benesh, D.C., N.D., maintained a chiropractic office in Cleveland, Ohio. One day a patient was lying face down on a treatment table, when Benesh noticed *Dr. Shelton’s Hygienic Review* jutting out from the woman’s purse. With her permission he borrowed and read it. Benesh’s discovery of the *Review* made him aware that Natural Hygiene was a better approach than chiropractic. Since he had been disappointed in the end results of his previous studies of the various therapeutic systems, he soon acquainted himself with Shelton’s seven volumes of *The Hygienic System*. He felt as though he had uncovered a “pot of gold.”

Benesh then interned at Gian-Cursio’s “Castle of Health,” in Rochester, New York. Afterward, Benesh and his wife opened Dr. Benesh’s Health School in Avon, Ohio, where they provided accommodations to supervise twelve fasters.<sup>2</sup> Thus Benesh joined Shelton, Claunch, Esser and Gian-Cursio in their efforts to promote the principles of the system of care called Natural Hygiene.

“We constitute the five horsemen,” Shelton remarked to his co-workers. “We stand alone—the five of us against the world.”

And that world was in an increasing incredible state of disaster. A United States neutrality terminated in 1941 when the United States Pacific fleet was attacked by the Japanese at Pearl Harbor. On December 7, 1941, the United States declared war on Japan. Germany and Italy declared war on the United States a few days later. And Shelton’s fight for freedom of health care continued.

☞ Shelton found a need to clarify the terms fasting and starvation because the horrors of Nazi imposed starvation were reported in contemporary accounts of concentration camp victims. By 1942 Hitler succeeded in expropriating all Jewish businesses and property

<sup>1</sup> Interview with Dr. William L. Esser, Lake Worth, Florida, 27 December 1985.

<sup>2</sup> Correspondence between Dr. Gerald Benesh and Jean Oswald, 10 January 1983.

in Germany and Austria: 68,000 Jews were massacred in Odessa and Kiev, Russia, by Germans and 300,000 Jews were deported from the Warsaw Ghetto to the Treblinka death camp in Poland.

People were horrified when they saw pictures of the emaciated prisoners of war who had starved to death in Hitler's concentration camps. Consequently, the majority of the American people misconstrued the words fasting and starvation as synonymous even though there is a distinct difference between the two terms. To disassociate his school from negative connotations Shelton clarified these differences in his books and articles.

*Fasting*, as used by the hygienist, means to voluntarily abstain from food except pure water. The fast provides a physiological rest for the entire body. When digestion and assimilation of food are suspended, the elimination of toxins is increased. Aging and sick cells are renewed and regenerated, providing disease has not reached an irreversible state. Blood pressure decreases during this period of rest. The process of healing is facilitated. Excess fat and abnormal deposits are consumed as food during the fast while the cells and tissues of vital organs are preserved.

*Starvation* is not the same. To starve means to suffer severely from hunger. To starve means to die from lack of food. Before starvation and death occurs, the body will attempt to use its vital organs as a food source.

Those knowledgeable in supervising fasts know when to break the fast before starvation begins. The body indicates when the fast should be broken. A clean tongue, sweet breath, light-colored urine, and the return of appetite are signs. When one or all of these occur, the fast has been completed.

Because these terms were widely misunderstood, it was not surprising that Shelton's work was attacked by the press, which shared the public's confused concept of fasting. One reporter put this title on his article in the *San Antonio News* on September 4, 1942.

#### STARVATION DEATH CHARGE TRIAL SET HERE

Trial of Herbert M. Shelton, operator of a "health school" on a charge of starving Mrs. John Gillis of New York to death Friday was set for September 14.

The charge alleges Shelton, on a lecture tour of the East, persuaded Mrs. Gillis to enter "Dr. Shelton's Health School," seven miles north of San Antonio on Maltsberger Lane.

She entered the School in December, was discharged in late

March and three weeks later died in a local hospital.

The charge is "negligent homicide by starving a person to death and treating and offering to treat human beings without a state medical license."<sup>3</sup>

This case was never tried, however. The Gillis family later discovered they had insufficient evidence to prove that Shelton's care had anything to do with the death. Furthermore, Gillis's treatment at the hospital was questionable and Shelton could declare malpractice. Without concrete evidence the Gillis family had no case.

Shelton found it deeply painful to read the scandal about himself, his work and his school. He was losing credibility after having such news appear in the local newspaper. But he had been through it before in New York City. He knew he had no choice but to remain optimistic and move onward.

The abortive charge of "negligent homicide" did not suppress his prolific pen. In 1942 *Health for All* came off the press. In addition, the *Hygienic Review* never failed to reach his readers each month.

Shelton managed to keep his unconventional beliefs and ideas in the public eye. He was soon to be recognized internationally by a world-renowned figure—Mahatma Gandhi.

## 14

### GANDHI'S FAMOUS FASTS

By 1943 thousands of copies of Shelton's two dozen different books were being distributed from coast to coast. His books were novel and controversial. They were forthright and honest. Not only did the books sell in the United States, but they were being sold abroad. His volume three of *The Hygienic System* (which was later called *The Science and Fine Art of Fasting*) had sold in such distant places as India. It was purchased by Mahatma Gandhi, the most powerful leader in all of India.

Gandhi, inspired by Shelton's work, invited him to India to lecture and to teach the principles of what he knew as "nature cure" at the Indian Universities. Gandhi (through his secretary) asked Shelton to

<sup>3</sup> *San Antonio News*, 4 September 1942.

stay for a period of six years.

Shelton gave this invitation much thought. It would be an opportunity for Gandhi, who fought for the correction of injustice in racial, religious and political freedom, and for Shelton, who fought for the correction of injustice and lack of freedom in health care, to work and study together. Just as Shelton was going to accept the invitation (for a period of only two years), the furies of World War II intervened. Disappointed, Shelton could not accept Gandhi's offer.<sup>1</sup>

Though they never met, Shelton advertised and sold Gandhi's booklet called *A Guide to Health*. Shelton described Gandhi's work as "a moral as well as a therapeutic guide; for, Gandhi said, disease is the result of our thoughts as much as of our acts." And Gandhi kept Shelton's volume three close at his bedside throughout his days of fasting.

Shelton wrote an article about Gandhi's famous fasts in his *Review* in 1943. Part of the article is reproduced below:

Gandhi fasts for several reasons—sometimes as a means of improving his health, sometimes as a penance for the sins of India, sometimes to twist the tail of the predatory British lion. He often fasts to punish himself for the errors of his followers—a kind of vicarious atonement of which we doubt the efficacy. As many of his fasts have received world-wide publicity, it may be of interest to our readers to learn something about this remarkable man and his fasting.

Some of his fasts have been directed against his followers—in penance for their violence. In 1924 he took a three week fast in an effort to secure Hindu-Moslem co-operation. This fast ran counter to the old imperialistic practice of "divide and rule" and failed of its purpose.

This fast was Gandhi's 17th fast since 1906 over half of them growing out of disputes with the British slave-holder. This fast, unlike his previous ones gained no concessions from the British but seems to have served to bring the Indian peoples closer together and certainly focused world attention upon the plight of chained India. Perhaps the British slave-holders knew that Gandhi would not die from twenty-one days of fasting. They may have learned enough about fasting to know that a fast of this duration would not make Gandhi a martyr around whom revolt might flare.

Efforts were made around the middle of Gandhi's fast to convince the world that he was weakening fast and could not last

<sup>1</sup> Keki R. Sidhwa. "Two Fighters for Freedom—Mahatma Gandhi and Herbert Shelton." *Journal of the British Natural Hygiene Society* 95 (1983): 8.

twenty-one days. These efforts were a dud and Gandhi finished in good condition as he himself knew he would when he started on the fast.

The press of March 3rd tells us that "Gandhi's survival surprised his doctors, who on the 11th day had predicted that he would die soon unless he took food. Gandhi rallied soon afterward and ended the fast stronger than he was during its second week. It is no uncommon thing for fasters to have periods of apparent weakness followed by periods of increased strength. One day the faster may be too weak to get out of bed, the next day he may want to play football.

Given a sound organism, that is, one with all vital organs in good condition, the length of time one may safely go without food is determined by the amount of food reserves stored in his body and the rapidity with which these reserves are consumed by activity and in resisting an unfavorable environment.

Here at the Health School we were all—nurses, guests and I—laughing at the predictions that Gandhi would die before the end of his twenty-one days of physiological rest.

Ignorance is always finding miracles where there are none and recognizing worth where there is only a vacuum. Mathew Low, writing in *The New Leader*, March 13, said: "It was a medical miracle that pulled Mahatma H. Gandhi through his twenty-one day fast."

Mr. Low knows almost as much about fasting as the medical gang that stood around Gandhi's bedside and kept yapping about the imminence of his death. Gandhi came through on his reserves and neither "medicine" nor miracles supplied these. Mr. Low speaks of Gandhi's fast as "starving" thus revealing in another way his gross ignorance of one of the oldest and re-adjustment of which we have any history— a method that is in common use in disease and in many other conditions throughout the animal kingdom.<sup>2</sup>

Shelton was well aware that Gandhi's knowledge of fasting was not confined to what he had learned from observing his mother who had indulged in fasting before him and it was not only confined to what he had learned from his religious instructors. He knew the work accomplished by Bernarr Macfadden. He was a friend of Dr. Behramja Madon, a naturopath who had graduated from the Macfadden College of Physical Culture long before Shelton. Gandhi had a vast knowledge of fasting before he used it as a political

<sup>2</sup> Herbert M. Shelton. "Gandhi Fasts Again," *Dr. Shelton's Hygienic Review* San Antonio: Dr. Shelton's Health School (Hereafter cited as *Review*). (April 1943): 169.

weapon.

Shelton invoked the attention of his readers by pointing out Gandhi's use of the fast. In so doing, he attempted to lessen the fear in people's minds by showing them that fasting is not *starving and that fasting does not kill*.

## 15

### ATTACKS FROM THE CRITICS

In 1946 Shelton added the subtitle "Let's Have the Truth Though the Heavens Fall," on the front cover of his *Review*. Within the seven years after its birth, he reached seventeen hundred subscribers. Thanks to Homer Whitt, his generous printer, who did not raise the price of printing in keeping with the increases in paper and labor costs, Shelton was able to keep his small enterprise alive.

But did he make a profit? No. Did the *Review* break even after the end of World War II? No. Nevertheless, Shelton continued with his efforts and he did not feel he wasted his time, energy or money working on the *Review*. It was his belief that if Hygiene was to advance it had to be brought to the minds of as many laypeople as possible. He felt he could not reason with the physicians who were "deafened by the loud roar of threatened fallacy." His approach was to ignore them and go to the people—the people who could see, think and hear. This, he felt sure was the best way to spread the principles of Natural Hygiene.

Shelton's followers and dedicated readers of the *Review*, many of whom were rescued health wrecks who had turned to the hygienic life style, called him a genius. Those that lost trust and faith in their friendly family physician called Shelton a "prophet." Others, who avoided the surgeon's knife by following hygienic principles, showered upon him the worship of a near deity.

But Shelton was not showered with praise consistently for he did not have good rapport with everyone. Through the years he acquired various nicknames. Some knew Shelton by the nickname given to him by Fred Gardenhire, editor of New York's *Naturopath and Herald of Health* magazine. Gardenhire coined for Shelton the phrase "Sandbur of the Rio Grande." To this Shelton responded:

Somebody whose flesh has been deeply pricked by me has

dubbed me the "Sandbur of the Rio Grande." If as a barefoot boy or girl you ever stepped upon a sandbur, you have not forgotten how sharp it was, how much pain it caused and how difficult was its extraction. On the well-known principle that "it is only the hit dog that howls," I judge that the gentleman who honors me with this new title has been hit and doesn't like it.

Nonetheless, I am rather proud of the new title and shall wear it with the dignity becoming the true aristocrat. Having been thus knighted, it behooves me to carry the badge of my knighthood in pride and glory.<sup>1</sup>

Others who became familiar with Shelton's work called him "The Diamond in the Rough." Those that were anti-Shelton and anti-Hygiene called him "The Quack."

Shelton's attackers accused him of being a fault-finder and overly critical. In addition, he was accused of being repetitious in his writings and lectures. Often and more justly, he was called a workaholic because the man just tenaciously kept on working, working and *working*.

Even during his lectures Shelton had to be prepared to expect criticism from his foes. In an auditorium at a San Antonio College, one man shouted at Shelton after his lecture, "I think you're *crazy!* You're crazy to condemn the medical profession! My doctor is different and does not do the things you say. My doctor is sincere and honest! I have faith in my doctor," insisted the man.

Shelton responded, "I think you're *crazy* too for condoning the medical profession! All around us are millions of examples of medical bungling and vandalism. A child may do the right thing with the right means. The most exalted genius, equipped with the latest complexities of science, cannot do the right thing with the wrong means," Shelton replied. "If medical men and women today find they are used by the manufacturers as salespeople for their never-ending stream of new wares, this is the fault of the racketeering end of the outgrown capitalistic system. Inherently, medical people are as honest as any other class. You do not understand that physicians often do not educate their patients in how to live healthfully."

The man had nothing more to say. He walked out from the lecture hall.

Shelton continued. "The medical profession has stigmatized every new discovery as quackery until they have been kicked into a recognition of it. Then they imprudently turn around and say, 'This is

<sup>1</sup> Herbert M. Shelton. *Review* (September, 1944).

no *new* thing—we have known it for years.’ They denounced Harvey as a quack when he discovered the circulation of the blood. They denounced Gaul when he proved the brain is the organ of the mind. The medical profession hounded Semmelweis to his grave and drove Oliver Wendell Holmes from the profession, when these men discovered that physicians were killing mothers in childbirth with their dirty hands.”

As the audience applauded, Shelton paused and then added, “Speaking about Oliver Wendell Holmes, he once poked fun at the pretensions of his own profession, or at their increasing demand that no one, except themselves, should be permitted to care for the sick. Holmes advocated a law authorizing physicians to kill off their patients if they could not *cure* them in their way. This seems to have been to prevent them from falling into the hands of the practitioners of other schools and getting well. If the legislatures would not prevent “incurables” from getting well after the physicians had told them they could not get well, then the physicians could confirm their prognosis by killing the “incurables.” No wonder his colleagues drove Holmes out of the profession!”

The audience found humor in Shelton’s remarks about Holmes. But not everyone. When back at the Health School Shelton occasionally received letters of criticism. He was accused of being unscientific. The charges were often capricious and captious. Often they were not sincere, or they were born out of a misunderstanding, or a jealousy or envy.

Many, however, found his approach genuinely scientific and satisfying. To them, the accusations of Shelton’s work not being scientific seemed absolutely false and ridiculous. They felt his work could bear examination by the most scrupulous scientists. His admirers felt Shelton definitely recognized all the scientific knowledge and data that was available and that was contained in the sciences of physiology, anatomy, biology, sociology, philosophy and psychology. Shelton appreciated these sciences for their universal significance. Shelton emphasized that Hygiene is the science of health and life, and he believed that all the true and genuine sciences would acknowledge Natural Hygiene as being truly scientific.<sup>1</sup>

Still, some did not understand or accept this science of health and life called Natural Hygiene. Shelton was prompted to publish this reply in his *Review* to all those who accused him of being *unscientific*:

<sup>1</sup> Interview with Joseph Reed, Bridgeport, Connecticut, 6 August 1982, and interview with Jack Trop, Miami Beach, Florida, 29 December 1981.

When ‘science’ divorces herself from her capitalistic masters and ceases to play the part of bawd, when she discards her stultifying axiom that only conventions are acceptable as data, when she seeks for truth without fear or favor, when she discards her burden of prejudices and throws off her prepossessions, when she empties her inflated body of its gaseous vanity and odoriferous pride, when she becomes willing to learn of all who have knowledge, when she places more stock in fact and principle than she does in captivating speculations garbed in a flowery array of technical gibberish, and, neither last nor least, when she unburdens herself of her accumulated load of methodological puerilities, then, and not until then, will she be able to say to me, you are scientifically and demonstrably wrong.

I am far from being infallible. I will learn more as I go along. But, as between my work and that of the “science of medicine” and the “science of dietetics,” I’ll await the verdict of time with calmness and without fear. I am not “scientific” and in the present state of “science” I would be a fool if I were. I’d rather be right than to be “scientific.”<sup>2</sup>

Shelton not only made some laypeople unhappy by his opinions but he definitely made more than a few physicians angry as well. And why not? Article titles that physicians did not fall in love with included these: “Need Your Physician Be So Useless?”, “More Physicians, More Drugs and More Danger,” “Have You Been Carved?”, and “Women Vandalized by Surgeons.” Such articles appeared in the *Review*.

Shelton also repelled some people when he expressed his political views. Shelton, a born iconoclast, saw that deceit and corruption were not only the province of medical science but also of politics. He was at times as caustic about politicians as he was concerning physicians.

“Sick old men run America!” he claimed. “No diplomat trusts any other diplomat, for all of them know that diplomacy is a glorified form of deceiving,” he told his readers.

After the death of Franklin Delano Roosevelt at the age of sixty-three in 1945, Shelton commented on what he thought of the Yalta Conference. At the conference “the drink flowed freely, the smoke was as thick as a London fog, and the banquet tables groaned under their loads of rich foods.” There was tension in the conferences from beginning to end. There were petty annoyances and frequent quarrels. Frayed nerves were on edge. The conference lasted far

<sup>2</sup> Herbert M. Shelton. “I am not Scientific.” *Review* (September 1946): 12.

into the night. "Is it any wonder the President said he was 'mortally tired,' when he returned home from his last conference?" Shelton said the former President never gave himself an opportunity for recuperation and he described the late President's conduct as *foolish*. "Intelligent men never conduct themselves in this irrational manner."<sup>3</sup>

It is easy to see why Shelton did not always win a popularity contest with his sharp, hard-hitting words. His nickname "The Sandbur of the Rio Grande" became more fitting with each passing year. His work and his name became known to more people primarily because of his fierce determination and his unsurpassable energy. In Shelton's own words, the following letter written on February 8, 1946, to Gian-Cursio describes how Shelton expended this energy during a typical day at work at his sixth school.

Dear Chris,

My own work is doing well. My place is full and I am having to hold fasters up until I can have room for them. I am sadly in need of more room, also of more help. My hands are showing the signs of their dish-washing career. Believe me, this war and the conditions it has created have really given me plenty of work to do. Try running an institution and a magazine with little help and you will know what I mean. At times I had no nurse at all and was forced to do all the work myself. I made beds, swept floors, cooked meals, served them, washed dishes, and looked after the fasters in all ways. In addition to this I had to do all my other work. At times I would dry my hands after washing the dishes, jump into my car and run to the print shop and help the printer with the *Review*. He, too, was short of help.

Having lived through this I think I can live through anything.<sup>4</sup>

☞ One month later Shelton was not able to recall at which task he was involved in when a blazing fire ran rampant throughout his home on 121 Marcia Place. Was he at the printers that afternoon? Or was he picking up a client at the bus depot? No one knew for sure. Besides, he had no telephone and he could not be reached immediately. Shelton was located after the firemen had spent three hours putting out the fire. Fortunately, Ida, Willowdeen and Walden were not home when all at once the flames burst forth.

An amateur electrician had placed light fixtures indiscriminately

<sup>3</sup> Herbert M. Shelton. "Suicides of Earth's Great Men," *Review* (May 1948): 196.

<sup>4</sup> Correspondence from Dr. Herbert Shelton to Dr. Christopher Gian-Cursio. 8 February 1946.

throughout the 1900 frame dwelling in the 40's. The fire began in Willowdeen's bedroom closet and was caused by an electrical wiring problem. An aunt and uncle had arrived to visit, saw the fire, and alerted the family to the calamity.

The family rented a neighborhood apartment while their home was completely remodeled, even with a new office for Willowdeen who was now the Health School's part-time secretary. The towering maple and pecan trees now surrounded a home with a lannon stone facade. Things were soon back to normal as Shelton made the fifteen-minute drive from the School to his home twice a day to visit with Ida.<sup>5</sup>

Shelton returned to his busy life at once and also returned to his inconsistent driving habits between the Health School and his home. Sometimes he would drive slowly, creeping along, even waiting too long at an intersection, and moving only when he heard a beep from the driver behind. He was reading his mail. Other times, with a pencil in hand behind the wheel, he would proofread pages for the *Review* or for a book in preparation. When he did not have reading material, Shelton sped along, seldom coming to a complete stop at a stop sign. If the driver ahead was moving too slowly, Shelton would illegally pass the vehicle on the right if it were not possible to pass on the left.

One particular day at home, Shelton knew he must not forget to stop at the market on his way back to the Health School. There was no watermelon or green salad for his guests. "Often you run, daddy. You don't walk," Willowdeen told him as he was getting into his car.

"There's so much I have to do. I have to run!"

He just then remembered when he pulled out of the driveway while eating his lunch in the car, that he had to see Homer Whitt, the printer, about the new cover design for his *Review*. And if he had extra time that day he would prepare a lecture to be given at the Texas Chiropractic College. There were always too many tasks he felt compelled to accomplish.

Unfortunately, even as demands on Shelton's time increased there came also a decrease in the number of leading "horsemen" to assist him. That evening Shelton was informed of tragic news. Dr. Stanford Claunch was fatally injured when he was hit by a car. Claunch, in his sixties, was struck on his way to a garage where his car was to be repaired in Everett, Washington.

Claunch had been one of Shelton's first co-workers. Shelton felt a great loss in having his fearless friend die in the best years of his

<sup>5</sup> Interview with Ida Shelton, Alamo Heights, Texas, 7 August 1984.

usefulness. The fire and Claunch's death—these were unpleasant hardships to add to Shelton's troubles in the aftermath of World War II.

## 16

### FOUNDING A HYGIENIC SOCIETY

In reminiscing about the year 1947, Dr. Shelton told me that the demands on his time and energy had increased as he had grown older. At age fifty-two, he tried incessantly to meet the increasing demands upon him.

At his sixth health school located near San Antonio's airport he told his daughter Willowdeen, "We have a Herculean task to accomplish. I must work as I have never worked before, for the spread of knowledge among the people of the world."

Willowdeen had been taking dictation and was sending out Shelton's dozen letters per day. Willowdeen was now her father's foremost secretary. She took full charge of the sale of his hygienic books while she and her mother also continued to assist in getting the *Hygienic Review* to its readers each month.

Willowdeen noticed her father worked even harder on the *Review* since he had been forced to raise its cost per year to \$2.00. To compensate for the increase in price, Shelton tried to give his readers a better magazine each month than he had in the past.

Two new colleagues appeared that year to help Shelton promote the hygienic cause. John Brosious, D.C., served an internship at Gian-Cursio's Castle of Health, New York City, and afterward practiced Hygiene in Reddington Shores, Florida. James McEachen, D.C., served his internship at Benesh's Sanatorium, Cleveland, Ohio, and then opened the Hygienic Haven in Escondido, California. Hygiene was again being promoted in five states.

Those that practiced Hygiene did, however, have their problems. Gian-Cursio described to me how he had been arrested under circumstances similar to those that had brought about Shelton's one-month imprisonment in 1933. On two different occasions in New York City, Gian-Cursio had been convicted of practicing medicine without a license. No one had been harmed in either case. Both times Gian-Cursio felt he had been unfairly attacked for he had not prescribed drugs to anyone. He was innocent of the charge but had

no other choice than to pay the fine.

Gian-Cursio was arrested a third time in 1947. Two officers arrested him at a home of an individual who pretended to be interested in fasting. The arrest was a set-up. The officers were outside the home before he had even arrived inside to talk with a client he believed to have been ailing.

This time he was not fined; he was in Rycker's Prison on a charge of practicing medicine without a license. He was to serve a one-year sentence.<sup>1</sup>

One day that same year Shelton also faced a new dilemma. He questioned whether someone had made an attempt to terminate his life by tampering with his car. While he was driving from the Health School to the family home his car suddenly went out of control. He could barely steer the car to the side of the road away from ongoing traffic. After his car was towed to a garage, a mechanic claimed that someone had intentionally loosened the steering linkage.<sup>2</sup>

Shelton contemplated the situation and decided that he would not allow himself to believe what the mechanic had said. He would never accept the fact that an enemy might think that he/she could destroy Shelton and thus destroy Hygiene.

But Shelton did begin to feel that the leaders of the twentieth century hygienic movement were opposed and harassed with greater tenacity than had been the nineteenth century pioneers. Graham, Jennings, Trall, and Tilden had all received opposition. However, the opposition in those days had not been nearly so organized. During the later 1800's an American Medical Association had not had its tentacles reaching into every business and home. It had not been a multi-million dollar organization that dictated their treatment to ill people. Therefore, he saw a great need for present day hygienists to unite. The practitioners at the fasting centers were becoming an open target for anyone who opposed the practice of Natural Hygiene. To complicate matters, no one practicing Hygiene was as well off financially as those who practice medicine, osteopathy or chiropractic. Natural Hygiene taught the health seeker how to take responsibility for one's own health. If all went well there was no need to return to a doctor for prescriptions, treatments or adjustments. For the hygienic practitioner wealth was an elusive goal. If problems arose, the hygienist could be easily

<sup>1</sup> Interview with Dr. Christopher Gian-Cursio, Alamo Heights, 9 July 1981.

<sup>2</sup> Interview with Dr. Vivian Vetrano, San Antonio, Texas, 2 August 1984.

ruined financially, if not spiritually. The need for the hygienists to join together became essential.

Herbert Shelton told me that he had attempted to unify the hygienists in 1928. Before he had left New York City, he had encouraged hygienist Joseph Reed to organize monthly study meetings. Periodically thereafter, Shelton had returned to lecture in New York City. It was only logical for those interested hygienists to follow up on their own with organized discussions at meetings of "The H.M. Shelton Health Club." This embryonic forum was later developed into two more study groups. One was called the "Rochester Physiological Society" established by Gian-Cursio in 1936 and the other was called the "Graham Natural Hygiene Society." The latter New York group was formed under the leadership of Jack Trop and Irving Davidson in 1946. These local associations led to the idea of founding a larger, more formal national organization.<sup>3</sup>

Finally, on June 28, 1948, a national society was formed by eight men in New York City. It was called the American Physiological and Hygienic Society after the first American Physiological Society founded in Boston in 1832 with Sylvester Graham as the primary leader.

The first president unanimously elected to head the Society was Herbert Shelton. It was decided that a convention would be held in April of 1949. Plans were made to adopt a constitution, just as had been done at the original meeting held in Boston over one hundred years before. The future looked optimistic—the hygienic system was officially re-established.

When Shelton arrived back in San Antonio, he received information of his election to a life membership in the Louisiana Naturopathy Society. Excerpts from Shelton's previously published books were highlighted in the world's first textbook on naturopathy. Shelton felt honored, although he was himself no longer a naturopathic doctor. He preferred not to be known as a member of any therapeutic cult. He wanted to be known simply as a hygienist.

Shelton's philosophy of Natural Hygiene was well exemplified in his 1949 work *Basic Principles of Natural Hygiene*. Shelton combined his theories with those of pioneer hygienist Russell T. Trall, M.D. The book taught the fundamental truths of the hygienic school. The fundamental truth that Shelton insisted must be recognized was

that *the living organism is active*. Shelton wrote that "medicines" are lifeless matter the organism rejects or casts out in any possible manner. The body *acts* upon the drugs; the drugs cannot *act* upon the body. The innate power of the living organism produces the action. One example of this action is evident when a laxative is taken to force bowel action. The common expression is that the drug acts on the bowels. On the surface level, this seems to be the case, but actually the opposite is true. A bowel movement soon follows after taking epsom salts. But the only action that epsom salts is capable of is a chemical action. Bowel action is a mechanical action, an action having to do with gastrointestinal muscles. The chemical union of salts or any other drug with any of the fluids or tissues of the body is destructive to them, impairing their structure and function. The bowels act to cast off their irritating factor to eliminate the drug with its inherent quality of self-preservation. The power employed and consequently expended in any vital or medicinal action is vital power, that is, power from within and not from without. A massive dose of epsom salts will not be followed by a bowel movement in a dead person. A person who is very weak will not react or will react feebly at best because the power of action is absent. Vital force is the cause of the action and the dead person has none, nor does the drug. Prolonged use of drugs will eventually weaken the living organism. Hence, Shelton posed this question: if poisonous lifeless matter can produce disease in the healthy, how can it be expected to produce health in the sick?

His answer to the question was not easily understood by the layperson. His 660-page book *Basic Principles of Natural Hygiene* sold primarily to only a few scholars. Shelton hoped that the upcoming convention would more easily educate the laypeople than his book had done.

On April 30, 1949 the first convention was held at the Diplomat Hotel in New York City. Shelton wrote and prepared the constitution that was adopted. Also, the name of the organization was changed to the American Natural Hygiene Society.

The convention succeeded in arousing the attention of eight hundred people, thanks to the promotional work done by Symon Gould and Jack Trop. It included four days of educational sessions that were concluded with a banquet and dance.

Shelton carried the brunt of the lecture obligations. Lecture titles included the following: *Is Hygienic Fasting an Effective Method to Maintain or Regain Health? The Failure of the Vegetarian Diet if Not Based on Hygienic Principles; Laws of Cellular Biology as Foun-*

<sup>3</sup> Present at the June 1948 meeting were Dr. Robert Anderson, Dr. Gerald Benesh, Dr. Christopher Gian-Cursio, Irving Davidson, Dr. William L. Esser, Dr. Jesse Mercer Gehrman, Symond Gould and Dr. Herbert Shelton. Interview with Dr. Christopher Gian-Cursio and Dr. Herbert Shelton, Alamo Heights, Texas, 7 July 1981.



*dations for Hygienic Care of the Sick; and Living Hygienically in an Unhygienic Environment.*

The convention succeeded in getting four hundred members to join the national organization. The way was paved for the birth of local chapters in various cities throughout the United States.

The Society's first convention went smoothly and many looked forward to the next convention in 1950. But the newly formed Society's bonds were tenuous. There was uncertain cooperation from the board members and there were no funds to finance a second convention.

During the months that followed the 1949 meeting the ambitious hopes for unity dwindled. Disagreements on the theory and practice arose and lack of financing hindered progress. The suggestion was made to President Shelton to forget the idea of having annual hygienic conventions. Shelton was urged to simply give a lecture tour on his own. The outcome of the convention looked gloomy and uncertain.

However, the event did go on. The 1950 American Natural Hygiene Convention was once again held in New York City because Shelton donated \$900 to the Society's penniless treasury. The second convention, consisting of five days of hygienic lectures, attracted five hundred people. Shelton stressed the need for greater cooperation on the part of all hygienists. "We must all work together in making the idea of natural living better known to the public," he told his listeners. Shelton returned to his health school in San Antonio knowing the idea of unifying all hygienists would indeed take time.

On arrival Shelton learned he had received a letter of inquiry from England. It was from the famous dramatist, critic and novelist, George Bernard Shaw. Shelton quickly replied but never heard from Shaw again. Later Shelton learned that Shaw had died at the age of ninety-four in 1950.

## 17

### ARREST OF SHELTON'S CO-WORKERS

The opposition to Natural Hygiene in the early 50's was even greater than Shelton expected. He saw a steady stream of misleading advice fed to the public. Through the press, over the air, from every other medium, information spread about the *great progress* being made by

modern medicine in remedying and preventing disease. Shelton believed the medical literature itself was not always as full of optimism and shouts of triumph as were the press releases fed to the public.

In 1952 Shelton learned of the arrest of his co-worker, Dr. Gerald Benesh. He was arrested for practicing medicine without a license at his health school in Avon, Ohio. Benesh felt the state, the Better Business Bureau, and a powerful local newspaper had chastized his hygienic practice. The *Cleveland Plain Dealer* gave the news of the Benesh arrest front page coverage with an unusually large photo of Benesh and his school. He was reported as a "Fast, Diet, Rest Faddist." The writer of the news article proclaimed Benesh a great menace to the public.

Four of Benesh's client's had been subpoenaed. No one testified that he was harmed. In court they were asked: Did Benesh examine you? Did Benesh prescribe a diet? Did you pay him? All four answered yes to each question. This constituted the practice of medicine. Benesh was fined \$1,000 and condemned to serve a three month jail sentence in the Toldeo workhouse.<sup>1</sup>

Upon hearing the verdict, Shelton told his wife, "Gerald has the welfare of his fellowpeople at heart. He loves Nature and every living thing. His whole being is dedicated to helping others. That people should wish to hurt him is difficult to understand because he desires harm to no one."

Shelton felt Benesh's work was severely misrepresented. He knew many could attest that Benesh had taught them how to overcome their illness through hygienic management. Several health seekers who had been medically called "incurable" cases had recovered under his care.

The next year Shelton was informed of another arrest, that of his co-worker Gian-Cursio, on February 8, 1953. A state inspector of the New York State Department of Education, with a city detective, entered a residence where Gian-Cursio was interviewing a health seeker. Gian-Cursio's briefcase containing personal belongings was taken without a search warrant. Gian-Cursio was again arrested for practicing medicine without a license. The best lawyer in New York could not convince the court that the practice of hygiene was not the practice of medicine.

Although Gian-Cursio had not harmed anyone, he was once again sentenced to a one-year imprisonment.

<sup>1</sup> Correspondence from Dr. Gerald Benesh to Jean Oswald, 6 March 1984.

A Gian-Cursio defense campaign and fund was organized to assemble the support of all those who believed in the right of American citizens to choose practitioners according to their ideas of healing.<sup>2</sup> Many contributed to the cause. Shelton was one who contributed \$1,000 toward Gian-Cursio's defense.<sup>3</sup>

Gian-Cursio had served his term as president of The American Natural Hygiene Society that year. Despite the arrest and imprisonment that had occurred during his term in office, the 1953 convention remained a scheduled event.

The fourth annual convention, held in Miami Beach, Florida, was highly successful. The members of the Society throughout the nation, sympathetic toward the persecution of its leaders, gave generous donations and heartwarming support. The practitioners that were arrested were saved from being financially ruined. Their spirits were lifted when the members crowded the lecture halls and stood in aisles and applauded their efforts. The groundwork of the Society was now deep-rooted. Hygienists everywhere were now unified.

## 18

### “SANDBUR OF THE RIO GRANDE”

During the hygienists' struggle to overcome their difficulties in the fifties, Dwight D. Eisenhower was president of the United States. During Eisenhower's term in office the efficacy of The National Bureau of Standards was questioned by government officials and by the general public. Several food products contained preservatives, additives and chemicals that had not met standards of safety. Some chemicals in the products were known to be downright dangerous to a person's health. Regardless, from a business point of view, all products were given a fair chance on the free marketplace. Products of all kinds slipped past The National Bureau of Standards.

Advocates of Natural Hygiene found it hard to compete with the popularity of such products as the chocolate candy bar and “enriched”

<sup>2</sup> *The American Vegetarian*. “Vegetarians Rush to Defend Dr. Gian-Cursio.” Pismo Beach, California (April 1953): 1.

<sup>3</sup> Interview with Dr. Christopher Gian-Cursio, Alamo Heights, Texas, 8 July 1981. During our discussion Gian-Cursio told me Shelton was the best friend a man could have. And then he quipped that he intended to continue to associate with Shelton even if he was a “convicted criminal.”

white bread. Cigarettes, ice cream cones, hot dogs, soda and hamburgers were everywhere. Fast food restaurants to serve them were on the rise.

Hygienists found it difficult to cope with the increasingly unhygienic environment. They watched as medical technology made it possible for x-rays and prescriptions to become more plentiful. Amphetamines and barbiturates were easily accessible to the public. Tonsillectomies were performed by the millions. Needless surgery was moving ahead at full speed. Forceps, towels or gauze found sewn up in a patient's abdomen after surgery was no longer a shock to the American people. Shelton's warning of more drugs, more physicians, and more danger had become a reality.

While Shelton watched commercialism flourish in the United States he asked, “Who'll tell the truth?” His answer was, “I shall,” and his later writings more relentlessly attacked conventional thoughts and ideas.

Shelton's disapproval of and dissatisfaction with the growing unhygienic world was evident in his writing when he said to his *Review* readers:

When dogmatism subverts reason and superstition seizes the throne of scientific faith; when reincarnated credulity dons the robes of philosophy and wild speculations are proclaimed science; when triviality usurps importance and cowardly superficialities are substituted for courageous radicalism; when shallowness is mistaken for profundity and ignorance is esteemed as wisdom; when expedients are presented as everlasting principles and the artificial is confounded with the natural; when ancient superstitions are flaunted as the latest discoveries and the discarded lore of decadent peoples is presented as eternal verity; when the products of disease are made with the creator of health and poisons are swallowed as foods; when every slip backward is hailed as progress and the funeral dirge is sung as a joyous song of life; when soulless exploitation is blessed as beneficence and ostentatious greed poses as philanthropy; when the desire to sell goods is cloaked under a fictional danger of invasion and profit-gathering is garbed as the highest patriotism; when tyranny becomes the New Freedom and the will of the rulers is pure democracy; when re-election to office becomes a mandate to plunder a nation and kill its sons and inauguration a license to violate one's campaign pledges; when democracy is defended by destroying it and peace is preserved by war; when the friends of the people are traduced as their enemies and the wolves that come in sheep's clothing are accepted as the saviors of the

nation—then, it is certainly time for somebody to raise his voice in warning and tell people the truth.”<sup>4</sup>

Shelton was well aware that he must be one of those who dared to speak the truth.

Shelton attempted to speak what he thought to be the truth about the death of the baseball idol Babe Ruth and that of the screen star Robert Walker. In Shelton’s usual outspoken manner he said this about the death of Babe Ruth in his *Review*: “Babe Ruth is said to have died of cancer. This, I think, is a debatable matter. Did he die of cancer, or was he made worse by the treatment he received for cancer? If he had received no treatment, would he have lived a few years longer than he did?” Shelton believed Ruth was being used as a guinea pig. A new drug that was supposed to be a “cure” for cancer was being tested on him. “Ruth was a victim for human experimentation,” said Shelton.<sup>5</sup>

About the death of screen star Robert Walker, Shelton believed Walker died of sodium amytal (a barbiturate) poisoning. The drug was given to him hypodermically as a “sedative” to “quiet” his emotional upsets partially caused by a pending divorce. Shelton believed that if Walker had been taken off coffee, tobacco, alcohol, the prescribed sedatives, and given proper food and plenty of outdoor exercise, he might have had an opportunity to return to sanity. Walker’s death was *not* due to “natural” causes as described by the news reports, Shelton claimed.<sup>6</sup>

For the readers of the *Review*, Shelton’s words were hitting home. But were his articles and opinions made known to the majority of the American public? Certainly not. The *Review* subscribers totaled 1,900. What about the rest of the one hundred and fifty million people in the United States?

Fred Gardenhire, one of Shelton’s staunch admirers urged Shelton to accept advertisements to help him promote Hygiene more fully. Gardenhire could not imagine how the “Sandbur of the Rio Grande” could possibly make ends meet and he bet that Shelton had to dig into his pocket to bridge the gap between the reader and the printer’s maw.

Gardenshire said this about Shelton’s lack of publicity for the important things he had to say: “It has always been a sore spot with

<sup>4</sup> Herbert M. Shelton. “Who’ll Tell the Truth?” *Review* (October 1940): 181. The article is reproduced in part.

<sup>5</sup> Herbert M. Shelton. “Death of Babe Ruth.” *Review* (September 1948): 2021.

<sup>6</sup> Herber M. Shelton. “Robert Walker’s Death.” *Review* (September 1951): 1.

me that you do not get wider publicity for your articles. If you could only take that conscience of yours out in the sunshine and weigh certain definite propositions it would be wonderful. You have what people are looking for but just because you won’t accept advertising, you are hiding yourself under a barrel. Why can’t you make a declaration in your publication that advertising helps the mare to get over the hill?”<sup>7</sup>

Shelton admitted to Gardenhire that he had a stubborn nature. He told him, “I’m not afraid of the hearse and I have no intention of accepting advertising that is not in harmony with the principles for which the *Review* stands.” Shelton continued to promote his enterprise without financial aid from advertisements. Was he successful? Well . . . the stubborn “Sandbur” was thus far, losing money on his publication.

Though Shelton may not have succeeded in getting his magazine more on the black ink side, he did say the things people were looking for. Shelton had the ability to get below the surface of a matter. This is evident when he wrote the article titled “Bernarr Macfadden Dies.” Macfadden died on October 13, 1955, at the age of eighty-seven. The most powerful crusader for medical freedom died, of all places, in a medical hospital.

With sympathy and anger Shelton wondered who was responsible for sending a helpless old man, apparently in his last hours, into the hands of his life-long antagonists. Shelton asked why Macfadden was not permitted death without the assistance of the medical crowd he had fought since he was a very young man. The tragic misfortune gave the medical profession one final opportunity to degrade Macfadden and the use of the fast when ill.

Each news report about the death of the Father of *Physical Culture*, the “King of Publishers,” gave a different news account from the day before. According to Shelton the news reports went like this: “The first radio announcement of his illness and that he was in a medical hospital, stated that he was suffering with a serious digestive disease, ‘caused by three days of fasting.’ The following day, the announcement said that he was critically ill of obstructive jaundice, ‘caused by three days of fasting.’ The announcement of his death said that he died of a blood clot in the brain, ‘caused by three days of fasting.’” The death certificate listed the cause as general thrombosis.

Shelton remarked, “If the broadcasts and news accounts of Mr.

<sup>7</sup> Herbert M. Shelton. “Your Help Vs. Advertising.” *Review* (September 1948): 160.

Macfadden's illness and death reflect the true state of confusion in the minds of his physicians, it is probably still not known what "disease" he died of. The only thing they are certain of is that his trouble was caused and aggravated by a three-day-fast." Shelton knew a three-day-fast would neither have caused nor aggravated either of the conditions that they said he suffered with. He declared, "Nothing could be more helpful in digestive disease; it would certainly have been useful in obstructive jaundice; it will not dissolve a blood clot, nor will it produce one."<sup>8</sup>

Shelton contemplated whether Macfadden was hospitalized with malicious intent or whether someone was playing a grim joke on the dying man. Whoever was responsible should have had to face public opinion, Shelton demanded.

More articles and still more articles came from Shelton's pen in the early 1950's. He wrote, preached and taught with a daring vitality. Again and again the words echoed from the Health School on North Loop Road, San Antonio— *Let Us Have the Truth Though the Heavens Fall*.

The words to tell the truth echoed in New York City and inspired a talented singer, Theresa Gay to write a poem especially for Shelton. She titled her poem "The Quack":

*They called him Quack  
Because he dared  
To think on what he saw;  
When now and then, not where or when  
He challenged erring law.*

*They called him Quack  
When Truth he sought  
And alone feared not to stand;  
For as he groped, he dreamed and hoped  
To build a better land.*

*They called him Quack  
When bringing forth  
The good they had suppressed;  
And then enjoyed, what was destroyed  
In making false arrest.*

<sup>8</sup> Herbert M. Shelton. "Bernarr Macfadden Dies," *Review* (November 1955): 61. The article is reproduced in part.

They called him Quack  
As things unseen  
He'd aim to bring to view;  
Who will exploit, must be adroit  
And suffer nothing new.

They called him Quack  
Then did attack  
Oppressors always do;  
To have their way, their spies they'd pay  
To take their evil cue.

In fact it's there  
On every page  
Where history gives us sight;  
That from man's strife, the "Quacks" took life  
To lead the bitter fight.

So let us bow  
In gratitude  
And honor you, the Quack;  
The noble mind, is but benign  
When subject to attack.

And let us pray  
Till ends this day  
Your kind we'll never lack;  
We need you all the more, our friend  
THE MORE THEY CALL YOU QUACK<sup>9</sup>

THERESA GAY

Gay supported Shelton in his efforts to tell people the truth. She lectured and wrote several poems, songs, and articles to help enhance and spread the hygienic ideal.

The words *to tell the truth* echoed further throughout the United States. Helen Keller became aware of Dr. Shelton's Health School in San Antonio. Shelton received two letters from Keller. Through her secretary Keller expressed her interest and support of Shelton's work.<sup>10</sup>

Hygiene was attracting an increasing number of people. The total number of Shelton's co-workers and friends had doubled. He had a

<sup>9</sup> Theresa Gay. "The Quack" *Review* (September 1953): 12-13.

<sup>10</sup> Correspondence from Dr. Herbert Shelton to Jean Oswald, 15 November 1984.

rare gift of inspiring his associates. With the help of his associates he believed "Hygiene would become so big that it could not be injured by those who wished to belittle it and anyone who attempted to sweep back its tides with a broom would be drowned in its onward rush."

## 19

### A WOMAN "HORSEMAN"

In the 1956 United States presidential election, Adlai Stevenson was the Democratic nominee, Dwight Eisenhower the Republican nominee, and Herbert Shelton was nominated on a third party ticket at the Vegetarian Party Convention in New York. On November 7, 1956, Dwight Eisenhower was re-elected to a second term with Richard Nixon as Vice-President.

Shelton's reaction to losing the election was farcical. He quipped to his son, "I should have been disqualified because I don't have any of the qualifications to be president. For instance, I'm a hygienist and I don't smoke. I'm a vegetarian so I don't fish. I never learned how to golf."

Although Shelton felt his nomination was comical his followers who nominated him were sincere. Both men and women continuously sought out Shelton's leadership. He did not have to court the people. Those who knew him, respected him. Many adored and idolized him. And why not? Shelton attracted men and women to him for a number of reasons. People sought his friendship because of his intellect, his revolutionary work, his magnetic presentations at his lectures, his handsome athletic condition and his wise counseling and guidance. A person could not have picked a better associate. Those close to Shelton considered themselves honored.

1957 brought in the beginning of the Space Age. Shelton, who had traveled by covered wagon with his parents at the turn of the century, learned of the first earth-orbiting satellite, Sputnik I, launched by the Russians on October 4, 1957. The United States was shocked by the Soviet achievement, but within four months, the U.S. Explorer I was launched.

By the year 1958, Herbert Shelton launched the hygienic cause further ahead into orbit. He published two new hygienic books.

In *The Road to Health Via Natural Hygiene*, Shelton described the

hygienic system of health care as a complete mind and body system for getting and staying well. The second was *Human Beauty: Its Culture and Hygiene*. This book had been in preparation nine years. Vivian Virginia Vetrano, a native of Houston, Texas, had been the main source of the book's inspiration.

Vetrano had first learned of the hygienic cause while she was a dancer in New York City in 1948. She discovered Shelton's book *Health for All* and was awed by its content. Vetrano had tried other means of keeping trim and fit for her dancing career but had found them wanting. Soon after discovering the hygienic lifestyle, she fasted seven days at Dr. Shelton's Health School to learn more about Natural Hygiene.

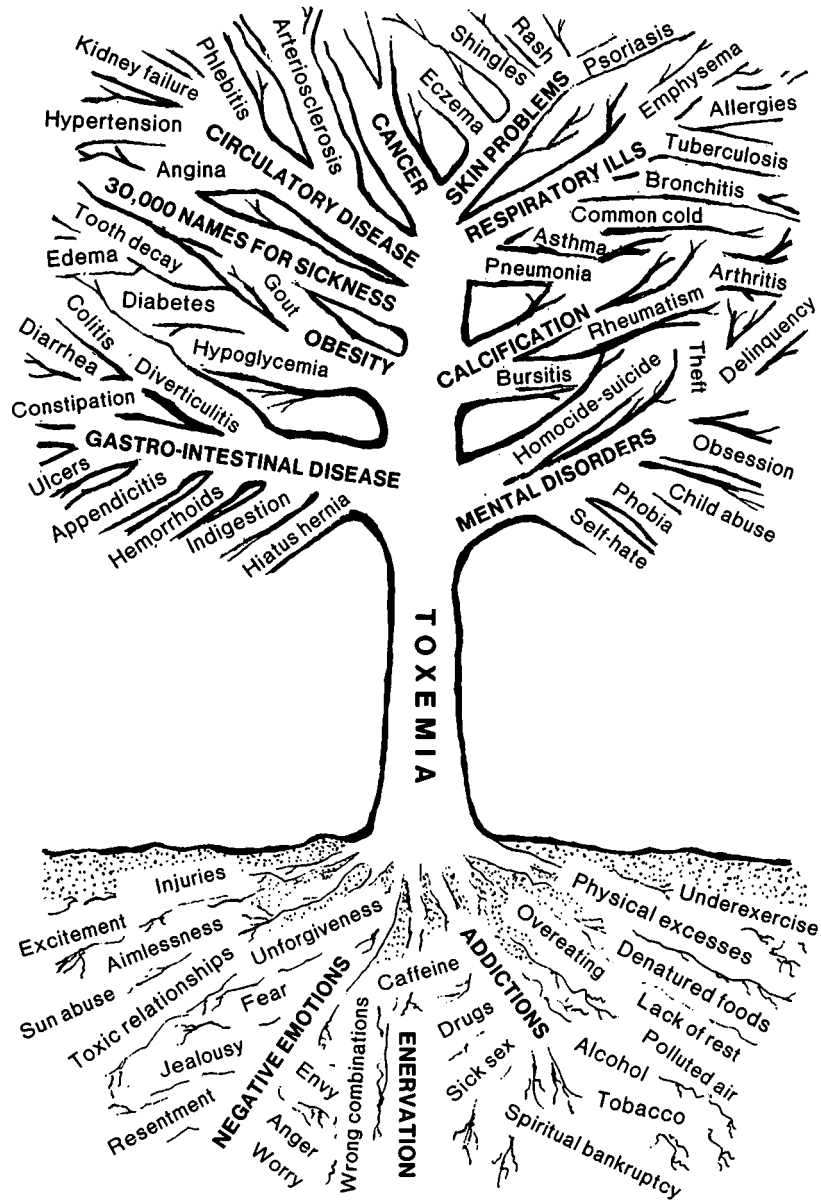
In appreciation for her newly found knowledge, Vetrano accepted Shelton's request to photograph her. Many pictures of her appear in his book on beauty. Shelton fondly dedicated his book *Human Beauty: Its Culture and Hygiene* to her: "To Virginia Vetrano, whose rare beauty inspired, and whose able assistance was instrumental in producing it, this book is affectionately dedicated by — The Author".

In this 1,040 page scholarly tome on beauty, Shelton emphasized the importance of cultivating genuine beauty, not artificial, manufactured beauty. He abandoned the shallow viewpoint that beauty could be put on with the aid of cosmetics that contain harmful chemicals. The book contained significant points for women in understanding the true needs of their bodies and minds. He made the reader aware of the new era of body culture. In this book Shelton placed the woman on top a pedestal and idealized her for her form, strength and beauty. He said that women should forget the chains of bondage in which they had been held so long and told them to act as free individuals.

During the mid and late fifties Vetrano became a gallant advocate of the hygienic cause. She lectured at the 1955 Convention in Washington D.C., the 1956 convention in Los Angeles, California, the New York City convention the following year, and again at the St. Louis, Missouri, convention in 1958. Her topics included *The Well Woman and How to Be One; Natural Childbirth; Hygienic Care of Children; How to Exercise and Stay Fit* and *Menopause and Its Symptoms*. In addition, Vetrano wrote numerous articles for *Dr. Shelton's Hygienic Review*. She served as a prime example of a liberated woman and hoped to some day become one of Shelton's foremost "horsemen."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Interview with Dr. Vivian Vetrano and Lillian Huitron, San Antonio, 2 August 1984.

**THE TREE OF TOXEMIA**



A modified illustration of the theory of toxemia as formulated by Shelton's associate, John H. Tilden, M.D.

*It is by virtue of the gradual clearing away of neighboring detail that works of the human spirit acquire that dignity and grandeur which confusingly enough we call by the name of classic.*

JAMES BARZUN  
*Classic, Romantic and Modern*

**Part Four  
THE LATER YEARS  
1959-1975**



Dansville, New York: September 11, 1959, Shelton delivered a series of lectures called "The Master Drama of Life."



Left: Vivian Virginia Vetrano, D.C., M.D., became one of the most prominent twentieth century hygienic teachers.

Below: Shelton's seventh health school opened in 1959.

Right: Dr. Shelton in 1968.

Lower left: Dr Shelton outside his health school in 1971.

Lower right: Since 1972 T.C. Fry has introduced Natural Hygiene to over one million people through his Life Science Institute in Austin, Texas.



Unique Among the Institutions of Earth . . .

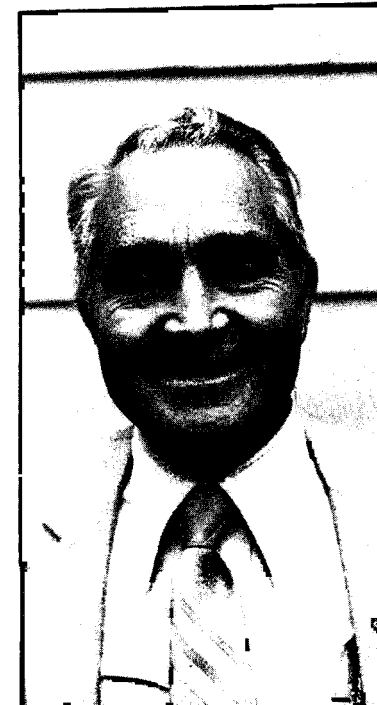
*Where Health is Built — Not Bought!*



DR. SHELTON'S HEALTH SCHOOL

Route 10 Box 174E

San Antonio, Texas 78216



## 20

### THE SEVENTH HEALTH SCHOOL

At the 1959 Natural Hygiene Convention held in Detroit, Michigan, Shelton was presented with a plaque from the Society members for his vigorous dedication and tireless efforts to promote Natural Hygiene. It was an appropriate time for Shelton's recognition since he had served as a mediator during the first ten years of the Society. The road to unity had been rocky. To unite under the Shelton banner was not always easy.

A particular area of controversy among the practitioners arose out of answering the question: What college should a person attend to become a hygienic practitioner? Thus far, the hygienic practitioners in the twentieth century had been from the schools of naturopathy and chiropractic. But it was proven the D.C. (doctor of chiropractic) and N.D. (doctor of naturopathy) after the hygienic practitioner's name offered no protection. Any chiropractor who did anything other than adjust the spine was subject to prosecution. And naturopathy was having difficulty maintaining an existence. After the naturopaths assisted the chiropractors to get licensed in some states, several chiropractors turned upon the naturopaths and became an effective opposition to the licensing of naturopathy.

Just what license *would be* acceptable? The board brought up the idea that one should have a medical degree to practice Hygiene. To this idea Shelton said: "I am not favorable to the idea that young students wishing to become hygienists should graduate in medicine. They would not practice Hygiene unmolested." He wrote to his co-workers: "I don't believe that it is easy for the human mind to withstand four or more years of constant pounding in the medical classroom and retain a full conviction of the validity of hygienic principles and the correctness of its practices. I know of a number of young people who entered medical college to prepare to practice Hygiene, and who have recently graduated, and not one of them dares to practice Hygiene. Such practices will cause them to be thrown out of the medical society, denied hospital privileges, denied malpractice protection and blackened professionally by the rest of the medical society."

Shelton asked, "Can one imagine a young Jew attending a Baptist seminary to prepare himself for the rabbinate? This is not as bad as going to a medical college to prepare for the practice of Natural

Hygiene."

Shelton believed the physician who accepted the principles of Natural Hygiene was generally one whose experiences in practice had driven him from the practice of drugging, not one whose hygienic convictions came first and who then studied medicine so that he might later practice Hygiene.

A need for a College of Natural Hygiene became obvious. Natural Hygiene had to stand alone and carry its own banner and not sneak under the banner of its enemies. Hygiene must not be the tag-end of some school of therapeutics. Founding a college became a primary topic of discussion.

Another area of discussion concerned which foods were acceptable in the hygienic diet. Shelton said, "There is no philosophical necessity why the directors of the various fasting institutions throughout the country should adopt uniform eating programs. It is not possible to adopt uniform eating programs, situated as we are, in different geographical locations where the local markets afford considerable variations, seasonally as well as geographically. Broad principles are capable of wide and varied application." Shelton stressed that Natural Hygiene does not have to be confined to narrow groves.

When the leading hygienists differed on the finer points of Hygiene, to ease the conflicts, Shelton emphasized that all scientific groups have differences of opinion. "Mathematics comes closer to being an exact science than any other of our sciences, yet there are differences among mathematicians. There are great differences among astronomers, geologists, anthropologists, psychologists and biologists," Shelton stated. "Nobody seems to think that the savants in these sciences should be torn apart simply because these respective sciences have not reached such degrees of perfection that there are no differences among their respective devotees."<sup>1</sup>

Shelton still often unclouded the stormy viewpoints of his co-workers to keep the Society intact. The Society soon became the central force behind the promotion of Hygiene. Local chapters became the important means to spread the words "health by healthful living" and to acquaint a greater number of people with the Natural Hygiene Society.

In the same year, 1959, Shelton contracted with a building firm to erect a new health school. Shelton received a \$50,000 grant from a

<sup>1</sup> Correspondence from Dr. Herbert M. Shelton to Jack Trop, 24 February 1955, and to Dr. Jack Mega, 23, October 1957.



former guest, Charles Elmer Doolin (originator of the Frito corn chip), to build the new school. Doolin had improved his heart condition after a thirty-day-fast and claimed that following a hygienic lifestyle had prolonged his life.

The 28th of November, 1959, was a warm, sunny day when Shelton opened the doors to his seventh health school. It was located twelve miles from the former school. The newly designed brick building in San Antonio could accommodate forty fasters.

Shelton elated with his new fortune, toyed with writing a poem about his feelings. Shelton was not always the rough and tough "Sandbur." He was not always analytical. He had a warm compassionate side, a romantic side with the heart of a lover. Some who knew him well called him a "big pussy cat" underneath the "Sandbur" exterior.

The following example of his poetry portrays Shelton's constant struggles and his grim determination coupled with an optimistic feeling about the general public's gradual acceptance of the correctness of the principles of Natural Hygiene:

#### HYGIENE'S TRIUMPHANT SONG

The gloomy night is breaking,  
Even now the sunbeams rise,  
With faint, but cheerful radiance  
Lighting up eastern skies.

The mists are slowly rising  
From the valley and the plain,  
A great truth is awakening  
That shall never sleep again.

And you may hear that listen,  
Hygiene's own heart stirring song,  
That surges like the ocean,  
So cheerful and so strong.

You cannot stay the rivers,  
Nor bind the wings of light,  
Nor bring back to the morning,  
The old departed night.

Nor shall you check my impulse,  
Nor stay it for an hour,  
Until Earth's groaning millions

Have felt my healing power!

My spirit is progression,  
In the vigor of my youth;  
The foeman of Oppression,  
And my armor is the TRUTH.

Old error with its legions  
Must fall beneath my wrath;  
Nor blood, nor tears, nor anguish  
Will mark my brilliant path.

But onward, upward, healthward!  
My spirit still will soar,  
Till Health and Strength shall triumph  
And FALSEHOOD reign no more.<sup>2</sup>

HERBERT M. SHELTON

Shelton wrote a second poem but then quickly gave up writing poetry, and, consequently, limited himself to informative writing after he rated himself "a poet of the third rank."

## 21

### INTERNATIONAL ACCEPTANCE

By the time Shelton reached his sixty-fourth birthday, I learned that he had supervised over thirty thousand fasts and had published over thirty books. The "Sandbur's" pen had become known in Sweden, Spain, Italy, Greece, Australia, Israel, Canada, Mexico, India, France and England.

I discovered Shelton's writings brought him international followers. One in particular, was Keki R. Sidhwa, D.O., N.D., a graduate of the Edinburgh School of Natural Therapeutics, and of the British College of Naturopathy and Osteopathy. Sidhwa's childhood illness brought him to recognize the importance of Shelton's work. By the age of fourteen, Sidhwa had had double pneumonia, a heart condition, and seven relapses of typhoid fever. He was in bed eleven months at home in Bombay, India, in 1940. When it appeared Sidhwa was nearing

<sup>2</sup> Herbert M. Shelton. "Hygiene's Triumphant Song." *Review* (September 1959): 9.

death with a temperature of over 105°, he went into a coma. At this time his mother refused all medical treatment. Previous treatment had included hundreds of injections of various drugs prescribed by several physicians. However, Sidhwa's mother put only drops of coconut juice on his lips while her son was in a coma that lasted sixteen days. Her decision to withdraw from medical treatment had been influenced by Dr. Behamji Madon (Madon, a graduate from Macfadden College, had also influenced Mahatma Gandhi).

On the seventeenth day Sidhwa came out of the coma with no fever, no other symptoms, and no heart abnormalities.

Sidhwa later acquired Shelton's books through his contact with Madon. He became determined to bring the principles of Hygiene to England. In 1959 Sidhwa opened Shalimar Health Home in Essex, England. Under the influence of Shelton and his *Review*, Sidhwa, Alec Burton, D.C., D.O., and George Hall, N.O., D.O., co-founded the British Natural Hygiene Society and in 1959 published a journal called *The Hygienist*. Thereafter Sidhwa assisted in carrying the hygienic message to India, Britain, France and Italy. His goal was to someday lecture in the United States and to personally meet Shelton.<sup>1</sup>

Hygiene was also being promoted in Egypt and in the Middle East. The man responsible was Albert Mosseri, D.C., N.D., born in Cairo, Egypt.

Mosseri's interest in health began when he suffered from digestive troubles at the age of seventeen. He studied all the books he could find on "nature cure" and eventually discovered *Dr. Shelton's Hygienic Review*. Thereafter, Mosseri graduated from the College of Natural Therapeutics in London and published several hygienic books based on Shelton's works. He later opened the Maison de l'Hygiene Naturell in France. At his institute, Mosseri supervised fasters from Belgium, Switzerland, Italy, Spain, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, Czechoslovakia, China, Canada and the United States.

The world-wide spread of Hygiene was further enhanced in Australia. Alec Burton had moved from England to Australia in 1960. Single-handedly, he spread the message of "health by healthful living" to the people of Australia.

Burton's first step toward Hygiene was taken in 1949. While Burton was finishing his second year in medicine at Manchester University, in England, he became ill. A surgeon told Burton that his

<sup>1</sup> Interview with Dr. Alec Burton and Dr. Keki Sidhwa, Bridgeport, Connecticut, 4 August 1982.

appendix was inflamed and that rupture was imminent. He recommended immediate surgery; otherwise, Burton would die.

Burton, who was squeamish about the unpleasant consequences of surgery that he had witnessed at school, sought a second opinion from a naturopath. He advised Burton to fast. Under his supervision, Burton fasted eight days during which time the inflammation subsided. Surgery proved to be unnecessary.

Later, while Burton was questioning all medical methods and procedures, he discovered the works of Shelton and wrote to him in San Antonio. Shelton mailed copies of his *Hygienic Review* with his reply.

Burton left medical school and graduated with honors in chiropractic and osteopathy.

On October 26, 1961, Burton inaugurated the Australian Natural Hygiene Society which came into existence at the same time as the official opening occurred of Burton's new health school in North Sydney, Australia.

Burton enthusiastically told Shelton about the first meeting and wrote that Natural Hygiene had a great future in Australia. Burton also congratulated Shelton on the publication of his latest book, *Rubies in the Sand*.

Burton wrote, "I feel you are extremely modest, when in your introduction, you point out that perhaps another hygienist could have written this book. You, of all the hygienists, are the only one possessed of the necessary knowledge and experience to have compiled such an excellent work. You have written a book that will make hygienic history."<sup>2</sup>

The book which traced medicine from its beginnings two thousand years before to the present did make hygienic history. Many of Shelton's readers considered this book his finest. Reviewer Sue Hogan wrote: "This historical volume puts Herbert M. Shelton in the same category as the encyclopedist and philosopher Denis Diderot (1713-1784)."

Shelton wrote *Rubies in the Sand* in a period of six months. He spent an average of five hours a day on it. He dedicated this tome: "To Charles Elmer Doolin (deceased) and his wife, Mary Kathryn Doolin, whose munificence made possible the erection of the new *Dr. Shelton's Health School*, a modern temple of *Natural Hygiene*."

In *Rubies in the Sand*, Shelton affirms the supremacy and the timelessness of the hygienic system. He wrote: "Sick animals seek

<sup>2</sup> Interview with Dr. Alec Burton, Bridgeport, Connecticut, 5 August 1982.

rest and seclusion and abstain from food, sometimes even from water, facts which reveal that humans have no monopoly on the factors of Hygiene in the care of the sick." Shelton stressed that Hygiene belongs not to humans alone, but to the whole organic world. He believed its practical application must vary with the varying needs of the many forms of plant and animal life, but there is no form of life, from ameba to human, that does not require to meet its elemental needs in a manner conforming to its constitutional character.

Hygiene belongs to life—to all life. From the beginning has Hygiene existed; from the beginning has Hygiene been supreme. "The well-springs of Hygiene gush forth from the bed-rock of organic principles that are as eternal as the law of gravity," stated Shelton.<sup>3</sup>

The book was ready in time to be presented at a four-day hygienic educational conference held at the Hotel Henry Hudson in New York City from October 4-7th, 1962.

Oscar Floyd, president of Chicago's Natural Hygiene Chapter, assisted the New York Chapter in organizing what he called a Shelton Day Conference which would honor Shelton's sixty-sixth birthday and his outstanding forty years of dedicated work to the promotion of Hygiene. The event was highly successful with about four-hundred people present to celebrate "Shelton Day."

## 22

### BURNING THE MIDNIGHT OIL

Jan Lewis, a forty-five year old woman from New Jersey, heard Shelton speak in New York City during the "Shelton Day Conference." Lewis periodically suffered with a kidney stone problem. Reluctant to undergo surgery, Lewis believed fasting would be of benefit to her, particularly since she met another person at the conference with a similar problem who had successfully fasted under Shelton's care.

Lewis arrived at Dr. Shelton's Health School on April 11, 1963. Her examination and consultation lasted an hour. Shelton's hygienic aide then escorted Lewis to a room where she began fasting. She was

<sup>3</sup> Herbert M. Shelton. *Rubies in the Sand*. San Antonio, Texas: Dr. Shelton's Health School, 1961: 45.

instructed to rest as much as possible during her fast.<sup>1</sup>

Moments later the hygienic aide brought Shelton's next client into his office. Little did Shelton know that he was soon to be harassed. The man was an investigator from the State Board of Medical Examiners who posed as a health seeker suffering from a gastric ulcer. The investigator introduced himself as "John Kyle." Shelton, dressed in a sport shirt, and Kyle discussed his case history. Kyle told Shelton that he would have to get the money from his mother to pay for his room. Kyle secured the following letter from Shelton:

*Dr. Shelton's Health School where health is built . . . not bought.  
Corrective Exercise — Health Instruction — Toxin Elimination  
— Physical Culture — Rational Fasting — Body Moulding —  
Natural Diet — Sun Bathing — Rest. Not a Medical Institution.  
NO Medicines — Drugs — Serums — Surgery.*

April 11, 1963

Dear Mrs. Mary Kyle:

I have discussed your son's gastric ulcer with him and have assured him that he can make a full recovery in five to six weeks time. This will require that he come here and undergo a fast of sufficient duration for the rest of the stomach to enable it to heal itself. The rate for stay in the Health School is fifty dollars a week. After he resumes eating, there will be a slight additional cost, a small sales tax on meals. This amounts to forty two cents a week, but does not apply while he is fasting. My suggestion is that he undergo the fast at once and not permit the ulcer to become worse.<sup>2</sup>

Herbert M. Shelton

There was no "Mary Kyle" to receive the letter. Instead the press and its reporters were contacted immediately. The medical investigator made his attack and made sure the press would herald the news that Shelton was convicted. Once again Shelton had been deceived by a person whom he thought was a believer in his work.

The following article appeared in the San Antonio news:

<sup>1</sup> Jan Lewis fasted twenty-six days and the kidney stone was gone. Discussion with Lillian Gamble who was fasting at Dr. Shelton's Health School, San Antonio, 17 April 1980.

<sup>2</sup> Court of Criminal Appeals of Texas, No. 36847, H. M. Shelton, Appellant vs. the State of Texas, Appellee (1964).

### Ex-Candidate for President Jailed, Fined

The 1956 presidential candidate, who conceded defeat an hour after the polls closed, Tuesday faced a 5-day county jail sentence and a \$500 fine after his conviction of unlawfully practicing medicine.

H.M. Shelton, operator of Dr. Shelton's Health School at Bulverde on the Bexar-Comal County line, was found guilty Monday by a jury which deliberated less than 15 minutes in County Court-at-Law No. 2.

Shelton's lawyer, Forrest Bennett, gave notice he will file a new trial on grounds the state had not proved the offense occurred in Bexar County.

Shelton was nominated for the presidency at a Vegetarian Party convention in New York in 1956, but quickly conceded defeat by Dwight Eisenhower on Nov. 7, 1956.

He was accused of offering to treat John T. Richer for an ulcer condition last April 11. Richer, an investigator for the State Board of Medical Examiners, used an assumed name.

Shelton had no license or certificate issued by the board, the state charged.<sup>3</sup>

The news account said Shelton "faced a 15-day county jail sentence." However, Shelton succeeded in proving his innocence. The medical investigator's perjured charge against Shelton had been a futile attempt to stop him from continuing his work. Shelton won the case. But it cost him \$1500 in attorney fees. It also cost him many sleepless nights.

Ida, in particular, noticed that her husband was exhausted after the trial when she came to visit him one afternoon. Ida was now coming to the School to see him for he rarely found time to come home. Ida knew much of his time had been spent with Vetrano who was attending chiropractic college.

Their visits became shorter and their conversations only reminded each of them of how far apart they had become. Ida and Herbert sometimes seemed to be as far apart as Shelton perceived medical treatment and hygienic care to be. They were at opposite ends. Nevertheless, Ida and Herbert would stand by each other no matter what. It was their obligation to keep the family intact.

Ida sat in her husband's office and waited for him to end his phone conversation. He had agreed to pick up a man who was to arrive at the bus station in San Antonio. Shelton made the trip to and from the

<sup>3</sup> San Antonio News, 29 October 1963.

station at least once a day.

Ida watched Herbert take from his bottom desk drawer to show to her the manuscript *Fasting Can Save Your Life*. He had been commissioned by the American Natural Hygiene Society to write the book.

"The publisher has balked at putting out my book on fasting."

"Why?" asked Ida.

"The publisher feels that if people read the book on fasting and later encounter problems, the company will be sued."

"Are you going to publish it?"

"No. The Society has formed its own publishing company—The Natural Hygiene Press."

Walden entered. He arrived at the Health School to drive his mother back home.

"Please get more rest, Herbert," Ida pleaded. "You need more help. You don't even say no when people are so demanding of your time. Why, look at your hands tremble."

"I'll hire more help. I won't burn the midnight oil tonight," he assured his wife.

Ida was right. He was tired and even contemplated refusing to attend the upcoming Hygiene Convention.

The phone rang. Shelton's moment of relaxation abruptly ended. While Shelton was talking to the printer, his hygienic aide informed him that the man from Italy had arrived. He was waiting to discuss his illness and the faster in room nineteen wanted to see him.

Shelton attempted to rest more but failed to do so. The laws of Nature would soon slow down his perpetual state of motion.

## 23

### SHELTON'S LAST CONVENTION

The next year, 1964, brought the celebration of Shelton's twenty-fifth year of publishing his *Hygienic Review*, simultaneously with the sixteenth consecutive Hygiene Convention. Shelton received letters from all over the world from readers congratulating him on his jubilee issue. Words of appreciation and gratitude written by Sidhwa in England, Burton in Australia, and Mosseri in England appeared in the twenty-fifth anniversary issue. Words from American Doctors Mega, Gross, Benesh, Esser, Junjek, Clements, and Bass acknow-

ledged Shelton as their main source of inspiration to carry on their Hygiene practices. More letters from lay readers thanking the foremost exponent of Natural Hygiene were printed. Shelton received other letters from the Society's local chapter presidents across the nation. They joined to rank Shelton as not "Man of the Year" but "Man of the Century."

After reading so many letters of appreciation, Shelton decided to attend the sixteenth hygienic convention. He would go because Keki R. Sidhwa had made plans to come all the way from Essex, England, to speak at the New York Convention.

Six hundred people traveled by bus, car, train or plane to attend the 1964 convention. Many of them came to hear Shelton speak on such topics as *Enervation and Toxemia: The Cause of all Sickness; The Real Drug Story; Eating For Health; The Cancer Story; Meaning of Acute and Chronic Diseases; and The Great Equilibrator: Scientific Fasting.*

Three of the practitioners who were scheduled to speak were unable at the last minute to attend the convention. Shelton and Sidhwa had no alternative except to fill in for the practitioners who were not present. Each gave an additional six lectures.<sup>1</sup>

At age sixty-eight, Shelton, dressed in a white suit, looked handsome but somewhat fatigued as he approached the platform. Although he did not remove his suitcoat and begin demonstrating an exercise program, as he had often done in his youth, he spoke with much of the same zest. He refuted the old medical notion that substances may be either medicine or poison according to dosage. He told the audience that drugs are poisons. "What is good for one part of the body is good for the whole. It is not necessary to continuously poison one part of the body to help another, or to poison the whole body to help a particular part of it," he stated.

"Hygiene is based upon the laws of life. It goes to physiology for its principles," Shelton explained. "It teaches and insists that disease is not wrong action but that it is right action in relation to things that are not normal or that have no normal relation to the body. The central and basic powers of life are those engaged in nutrition, including those of digestion, respiration, circulation, assimilation, excretion and reproduction. The normal performance of these functions is health. When any of these powers are much modified to meet abnormal conditions, the modification is disease. The modifications are in the service of life, not in the service of death.

<sup>1</sup> Correspondence from Dr. Keki Sidhwa to Jean Oswald, 8 December 1982.

These modifications are integral to life, not foreign agents at work in the body. Disease is a vital process, not an entity. Life, health, disease are ultimately to be interpreted as different aspects of an underlying process. It is our own shortsightedness that blurs for us the wholeness and unity of life.

"Obey the laws of life rigidly. Be assured if there is any earthly way to restore health, it can be recovered by the healthy operations of the system."

The audience stood and applauded. They were back the next day to hear more of Shelton's teachings.

The following day Shelton talked about the surgical practices of the physician. He warned them to be very leery about surgical procedures and to obtain second and third opinions.

While he magnetically held the people's attention, he affirmed, "More than ninety percent of the surgical operations performed in this country should be recognized as superfluous. Only the most skilled surgeons should be permitted to perform the needed operations. With the exception of accident emergency care, there is a greater awareness of the inadequacy of medical treatment. Today's leaders in the medical profession are pointing out that a large share of the hospital population is there for treatment for disease caused by previous treatment."

After the hour-long discussion a woman asked, "Dr. Shelton, what effect does fasting have upon cancerous growths?"

"I have seen cancerous growths greatly reduce in size during a fast, but I *have never seen one totally eliminated*. And in some cases, cancerous tumors persist in growing, even through a long fast. Only benign tumors frequently disappear after the fast. Fasting does not remedy cancer, and I am convinced that it may hasten death in cancer of the pancreas and of the liver. In other types of cancer its tendency is to prolong life and to lessen suffering. Adopt a hygienic lifestyle. It is your best chance to avoid cancer."

Another health seeker stood and asked, "Dr. Shelton, can our body tolerate a certain amount of toxins?"

"Each one of us is different," Shelton answered. "If it were not that the body learns to tolerate these toxins, if it always resisted and threw them off, then no chronic toxemia could develop. The body would either exhaust itself in its struggles against the toxins or we would be forced to reform our modes of living and conform to the laws of being. It is the power of toleration that deceives us. It leads us to continue our disease building mode of living. Toleration kills us in the end. The power of toleration enables us to harbor our worst foes.

“One of the evil effects of chronic toxemia is the slow, gradual and certain destruction of the functioning cells of the various organs of the body. They are slowly poisoned to death by the toxins the body has learned to tolerate. People are deceived by appearances. Because they are not knocked down every time they do a thing they refuse to believe it injures them. Because someone else has practiced a certain vice for a number of years without apparent harm, they conclude they can do likewise. Toleration eventually leads to death.”

With the same enthusiasm, Shelton gave another lecture later in the day. In this talk, he discussed pregnancy and child rearing. He encouraged mothers to breast feed their babies and to view critically what their children eat. He told them to be careful about the commodities manufactured under the label ‘food’. He urged pregnant women not to overeat.

“Overeating during pregnancy,” said Shelton, “leads to indigestion, morning sickness, constipation, hemorrhoids, swollen ankles, varicose veins, over-distention of the abdomen, a fat baby and difficult delivery.”

Shelton warned mothers about the dangers of taking drugs. He told them quinine taken by the mother is known to produce deafness and blindness in babies. In regard to thalidomide (a sedative and hypnotic drug) he emphasized, “When mothers are made to realize that the inhibiting effects of thalidomide upon the development of the human embryo result from minute doses of this drug reaching the evolving child in the mother’s womb, they will be more cautious about the substances they take into their bodies when pregnant.” Shelton stressed the need for a more natural program of health care for the pregnant mother and growing child.

But after this talk, Shelton was more exhausted than he had been the day before. His voice lacked a certain vibrant quality. But no one knew how enervated he really was. Even fewer noticed the occasional slight tremor in his hands.

The next afternoon Shelton’s lecture was titled “Why You Have Arthritis.” “Chronic arthritis is a state from which full and lasting recovery is possible if a hygienic program is adopted before irreparable damages have occurred in the joint tissues,” said Shelton. “Even apparently hopeless cases make improvements. To know why one has arthritis we must first determine the cause. Fermentation in the stomach and intestines (indigestion) resulting from wrong food combinations is one factor causing the condition called arthritis. In almost all cases of arthritis there is a long history of

indigestion preceding the development of the joint inflammation. Inflammation of a joint is the meaning of the term arthritis. Food combinations that do not digest readily favor fermentation and putrefaction. If elimination is also checked, consequent upon an enervating mode of living, the toxins absorbed from the digestive tract tend to accumulate in the body. This results in the evolution of disease in line with the individual diathesis.”

Shelton continued, “When the liver and kidneys are constantly taxed beyond their limit in excreting the poisons resulting from indigestion, it becomes impossible for one to keep the blood and tissues free of waste and the absorbed poisons. The resulting accumulation of toxins from the tissues and from the digestive tract can’t be other than disease.

“While arthritis is frequent among athletes and physical laborers, a lack of exercise may contribute to its causation. It’s impossible to have normal health without meeting the normal needs of life in an adequate manner.” Shelton warned, “A sedentary existence is itself a cause of a general lowering of the tone and functioning vigor of the body. The inactive person has a sluggish circulation. This prevents normal tissue renewal. The ground is thus prepared for the development of disease.”

He ended his lecture by reviewing the common causes of indigestion and enervation. “Causes of indigestion,” Shelton described, “are over-eating, drinking with meals, eating when fatigued, eating immediately before engaging in heavy work, eating when emotionally stressed, eating between meals, lack of sleep, and the taking of drugs. Among the causes of enervation are all drug habits—the coffee, tea, chocolate, alcohol, tobacco habit and so forth. Physical habits include overworking, sexual excesses, over sunning, over bathing and all other excesses. Overworked emotions are prominent among the cause of enervation.”

Questions were asked after the lecture. One man asked, “Dr. Shelton, do high uric acid levels cause arthritis?”

“Arthritis conditions were once attributed to the accumulation within the body of uric acid, one of several end-products of protein metabolism. Some still hold to this older theory. But it’s unlikely that any one of the end products of metabolism—this is to say, any one of the wastes of the body—is singly responsible for the disease. There may be some deposits of uric acid crystals in the capillaries, but this doesn’t seem to be the cause of the disease. It was this idea that arthritis is caused by the accumulation of uric acid that gave to the idea that flesh eating helps to cause arthritis. The fact is that

excessive starch and sugar eating seems to have more to do with the evolution of arthritis than does flesh eating. But, we can't lay such developments to any one habit of life or to any one class of food. The total enervating mode of living and the total toxic load carried by the individual must be regarded as cause."

Another asked Shelton, "My arthritis seems worse in the winter. Why is this so?"

Shelton answered, "Arthritis may develop at any season, but is most often developed in the winter season. Cold seems to make the symptoms worse. The disease is much more prevalent in cold climates than in warm ones. Although there is no reason to think that climate, per se, is a cause of the disease. It's more probably that the inactivity of the indoor life, the lack of fresh air and the overeating of the rich foods that characterize winter living are the chief causes. But any influence that produce enervation and checks excretion will contribute to its cause."

"Are hot baths or massage helpful to the arthritic?" asked another.

Shelton responded, "The hot baths, the Turkish bath *cure*, the massage, the mineral springs *cure* that are popular have no other apparent benefits than that of temporarily palliating symptoms. As palliatives they are less damaging than drugs and this is the best that can be said of them. The sweat baths, hot baths, prolonged baths, massage and similar treatment add to the enervation of the patient and help to prolong the disease."

☞ The last day of the convention Shelton reminded his listeners to always view the hygienic way of life as a *total* program. Some were confused and saw the hygienic diet as being the most important part of Hygiene. *It was not*. Each element of the hygienic system was as important as the other. For example, Shelton stressed the importance of adults receiving ten minutes of sunshine each day. Sun baths are best taken in the morning or evening when it is not so hot. (In youth more sunshine is needed than in adult life.) The direct and unfiltered rays of the sun should come in contact with your skin. He believed that continuous denial of any one of the elements of Hygiene would weaken the whole body. "Say that a person is unknowingly denying his or her body sunlight," he said. "The digestive function will weaken. And I am convinced that assimilation is more impaired by lack of sunlight than is digestion."

Shelton directed his audience not to become one-sided in their manner of living. "One can't become well and strong through

exercise alone, or through diet alone, or rest and sleep alone. Fresh air and sunshine alone are not enough and don't imagine that by special breathing alone you can become healthy. All these things are good . . . but life is more than exercise, or food and drink, or thought, or rest and sleep. It is all these and more. Get married. Build a home. Rear a family. Statistics show that married people live longer than single people. Keep both mind and body clean. Avoid wearing too much clothing. Avoid over-bathing and sexual excesses. View life as a whole and don't get the idea you're an exception to the laws of life."

Shelton then discussed another facet of Hygiene—fasting. His book *Fasting Can Save Your Life* had been published by the Hygiene Press in time to be put on the sales table alongside his other books. In his lecture he explained, in a step-by-step plan, the rationale of fasting. He explained how fasting had been beneficial in cases of gallstones, eczema, sterility, anemia, psoriasis, epilepsy and mental illness.

In regard to cases of mental illness Shelton stated: "I've used fasting in cases of mental disease and have no doubt that fasting is distinctly beneficial. I'm convinced that when the insane person refuses food, this is an instinctive measure designed to assist the body in its reconstructive work. Many people have lost their abnormal mental conditions while fasting. All who have had extended experience with fasting have seen cases of insanity recover health while on the fast and many others make great improvement while fasting."<sup>3</sup>

When Shelton's last lecture was over, a woman from the audience stood and gave testimony about her fast at Dr. Shelton's Health School in 1951. She had recovered fully from ulcerative colitis after living hygienically after her fast. She publicly thanked Shelton for the splendid care and instruction she had received at his school.

Before she sat down, she said, "Dr. Shelton, I remember when I was drinking my *first* glass of orange juice after fasting thirty-two days. You peered in the doorway and with a mischievous twinkle in your eye, you said, 'Glutton!' I'll never get through being amused at the incident."

The audience laughed.

Another elderly man in the audience stood up. He told the people present that Shelton had helped him overcome his arthritis through

<sup>3</sup> Segments of Dr. Shelton's lectures are from the tape series "The Master Drama of Life."

hygienic means. He had fasted sixteen days at Shelton's school and thereafter remodeled his lifestyle.

"Doc, I recall you asked me how did I feel after fasting three days. When I answered, 'I feel good except a little hungry', you said with a smile, 'You have been eating for seventy years, how can you be hungry now?'"

The people laughed again and so did Shelton. And they laughed again later when a man in the audience asked Shelton a question about impotency. Shelton replied, "There is no such thing as an impotent man, only uninteresting women." He hesitated and blushed. "I'm really only joking. I don't want to lose the women's sympathy. Live hygienically—get lots of sleep and rest—abstain from all sexual thoughts, desires and relationships for a time and when you find a lovely lady, you won't ask about impotency."

Shelton stepped down from the stage and said to Sidhwa, "I believe the two 's' 's' have brayed enough for the week." They then attended a banquet and dance held at the Statler-Hilton Hotel.<sup>4</sup>

Sidhwa returned with Shelton to his health school afterward. He arranged to study with the master teacher before going back to England. Sidhwa felt honored and inspired for he had received the greatest compliment from his predecessor. Shelton had only come to the convention to inaugurate him. The New York Convention was the last Shelton planned to attend.

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### PROMOTE NATURE AND ITS STRENGTH

Shelton was no longer alone in his efforts to tell his *Review* readers what he felt about needless suffering or how he felt about medical treatments. He now had a co-partner to help with the *Review* and to assist with the supervision of his clients. Vivian Virginia Vetrano, D.C., B.S., graduated with honors from the Texas Chiropractic School in 1965. She was now employed full time at the Health School.

Shelton and Vetrano worked together at the School when the national mood in the United States was one of great confusion and apprehension. The costs and casualties of the unpopular war in Vietnam reached a level unknown in any other military engagement.

Protests were heard from the Senate, the pulpit, the press and particularly from the universities. American college campuses became sites of violence and disruption. Shelton had noticed a higher degree of independent thinking from the college students. He hoped to see a new generation of progressive thinkers who would also fight for their freedom to choose practitioners according to their particular beliefs and ideas about healing.

In 1967 as the war in Vietnam wore on, so did Shelton's war on certain medical practices continue. Shelton did not hesitate to expose what he considered malpractice in the treatment of the "pixie faced" stage, screen, radio and television entertainer Helen Kane, better known as Betty Boop. A New York newspaper carried an article entitled "Boop-Boop-A-Doop Girl Loses to Cancer." The news item informed the public that Kane had lived in retirement while "she fought cancer" for ten years. She had submitted to many operations, had had more than two hundred radiation treatments, and had been a hospital outpatient. In a *Review* article, Shelton questioned whether Kane died of cancer or from the treatment for cancer. Shelton said, "About the most dangerous diagnosis one can receive today is a diagnosis of cancer, whether the diagnosis is correct or not." Shelton believed that no more than fifteen percent of those who were told they had cancer had this disease, at least at the outset.

Shelton felt that often a cancer patient becomes a drug addict early in the fight. Thereafter, the patient suffers more from the addiction than from the cancer. He claimed that cancer per se does not cause intense suffering. "Overeating, wrong eating, drugging, radiation and operations can be the chief causes of suffering in these cases," Shelton wrote. Numbers of times he had seen cancer sufferers discontinue the use of dope simultaneously with ceasing to eat, and in three or four days, become free of pain. More than once he had seen these patients, after long periods without pain, eat one ill-advised meal, only to have the pain recur. In such cases, two to three days of fasting is usually enough to restore comfort, after adherence to a sane eating program maintains comfort.<sup>1</sup>

☞ Six months had passed. Shelton had begun work on a new book. He refined his theories in *Natural Hygiene: Man's Pristine Way of Life* published in 1968. In the more than six hundred page book he held firmly to the principles he had expounded for over forty years.

<sup>4</sup> Correspondence from Dr. Keki Sidhwa to Jean Oswald, 23 September 1982.

<sup>1</sup> Herbert M. Shelton. "Betty Boop." *Review*, (June 1966): 267.



He reminded his readers that Hygiene offers no grab bag of treatments for sale in the care of the sick. He offered hope that the time must surely come when it would be generally recognized that only such substances as help to constitute the fluids and tissues of the living organism can be of use to the body in a state of sickness. Shelton urged people to develop an awareness of Nature and its strength.

“Nature and its Strength” was the general theme of the 1969 Hygiene Convention held in Ithaca, New York. The board of directors of the Society chose the Ithaca campus because of a conscious development towards devoting more time to smaller education classes instead of to straight lectures to large groups of people at one time. The leading hotels in the crowded metropolitan cities had not provided the needed educational atmosphere. The board felt that the large cities with the accompanying pollution problems certainly did not provide the proper hygienic environment in which to hold the conventions.

Ideally, the Society members had visions of founding their own Natural Hygienic College. But the expenses were too great to make the Hygienic College a reality. Therefore, the existing college campuses throughout the United States became the preferred locations for future conventions.

The college site chosen for the 1970 convention was Hiram College in Hiram, Ohio. Rockford College in Rockford, Illinois, served as the educational center for the Society’s convention in 1971. At this convention Vetrano was voted the new President of the American Natural Hygiene Society.

After the Rockford convention, Vetrano returned to work at Dr. Shelton’s Health School. Vetrano observed Shelton’s diligent and selfless dedication to his most recent book *Fasting for Renewal of Life*.

The beginning pages he wrote with pen and ink; but, while writing, his fingers grew stiff. Holding a pen became difficult. He realized he could never hand-write another article or book again. This did not, however, stop him from getting out the words he had to say. He rested in bed while dictating the information for his book to Tosca, Vetrano’s daughter. They spent four and five hours a day working on the script.

One morning Shelton whispered to Tosca, “I’ve lost my voice.” Tosca moved closer and said, “I can still hear you.”

“Good. I’ve decided to title chapter twenty-eight ‘Affections of the Respiratory System.’ Take this down. In the succeeding pages of

this book we shall consider the use of the fast in a variety of common illnesses,” whispered Shelton, as he indomitably accepted his new physical limitations which, for thirteen years to come, would still not prevent his sharing the principles of Hygiene to which he had given all his energy.

☞ One day at the Health School in 1972 while Dr. Vetrano was writing an article for the *Review*, a faster said to her, “I want to see Dr. Shelton. I came all the way from Oregon and I must see Dr. Shelton!”

“Dr. Shelton’s bedridden as a result of overwork. Please understand he has no alternative except to rest more. I will supervise your fast,” explained Dr. Vetrano.

Health seekers coming to the School had to accept the fact that they would not have direct contact with Shelton. Fasters had to become satisfied to just watch Shelton take a morning walk or a sunbath in front of the School. But just seeing Shelton from a distance made many fasters feel confident, safe and secure. All they needed to know was that he was nearby.

During the days to follow, in the latter part of 1972, Shelton finished his book. The board of directors of the American Natural Hygiene Society read *Fasting For Renewal of Life* and tried to persuade Shelton to give his permission to have it edited. So far only two of Shelton’s books had been edited and copyrighted— *Fasting Can Save your Your Life* and *Health for the Millions*.

Shelton was not in favor of having his latest work edited. He admitted that while writing the script he was falling short in clearly presenting his ideas; still, he wanted no part of being edited. Shelton’s letter to the board of directors of the Society told how he felt about the suggestion: “I have a vivid memory of the editor of these two books (*Fasting Can Save Your Life* and *Health For the Millions*) standing guard over the typescript with a fountain pen in his hand, writing delete, delete, delete as he endeavored to salvage enough of each book to make a respectable pamphlet. I do not relish the prospect of subjecting *Fasting for Renewal of Life* to the same butchering process. Indeed I am sure that in my present condition I would develop writer’s cramp writing stet before we were half through the typescript. I am quite sure that I could not undergo the ordeal.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Correspondence from Herbert M. Shelton to The American Natural Hygiene Board, Chicago, Illinois, 10 December 1973.

Shelton lost the argument. The board of directors had the book edited anyway. Despite Shelton's protests, the book came off the Natural Hygiene Press in time for the 1974 Natural Hygiene Convention.

This convention, held at the University of Windsor, in Windsor, Ontario, was as successful as those in the past. An international gathering of Americans, French and English-speaking Canadians, and visitors from abroad joined together for the week-long educational program.

Many case histories were presented by the hygienic practitioners and laypeople. Classes were presented on the dangers of radiation, food additives, fad diets, and on how to manage stress.

A similar successful convention was held at Fairfield University, Connecticut, in 1975. Here it was announced that 1,660 acres of land had been purchased in Pearsall, Texas. One of the foremost purposes in the acquisition of this land was for establishing a college and a hygienic community. To many hygienists this was the most important announcement at the twenty-seventh annual convention. The idea of establishing a college had been discussed for twenty-five years. Several hygienists believed the dream would finally become a reality.<sup>3</sup>

*The true test of a great man—that, at least, which must secure his place among the highest order of great men—is, his having been in advance of his age.*

LORD HENRY BROUGHAM

## Part Five LIFE IN THE EIGHTH DECADE 1976-1984



*Outside Dr. Shelton's Health School, two unidentified guests pose with Shelton at age eighty-four.*

<sup>3</sup> Five years later, the land was sold because of a lack of funds to establish a college and a planned hygienic community.

## THE TOWN OUTRAGE

By 1983 Dr. William L. Esser had supervised over 35,000 fasts.



1983: Shelton's co-authors, Jean A. Oswald (left) and Jo Willard (right).

Shelton's colleagues (from left to right), Dr. Alec Burton opened his hygienic school in 1961, Dr. Keki Sidhwa in 1959, Dr. David Scott in 1957 and Dr. Ralph Cinque in 1979.



In 1979 Keki R. Sidhwa, D.O., N.D., dedicated his book, *Medical Drugs on Trial? Verdict "Guilty!"*, to "Dr. Herbert Shelton and to all those who have helped the world in general to be a little better than when they found it." Sidhwa, as did Shelton, exposed the practices of the drug industry, big business and food technology. He discussed the lessons of thalidomide and substantiated Shelton's views when he discussed the effects of drugs on different systems of the body.

But no matter who dedicated what book to whom—the people in San Antonio were not sympathetic to the peculiar establishment that was situated on one of their highest hilltops. Most of the townspeople did not understand Shelton's spite for the growing popularity of the "swine flu craze" of 1976. Few listened to his warnings. Although his words were dictated in a soft whisper, the message was an important and powerful one. In Shelton's warnings against taking the flu shots, he said: "It is a cardinal principle of Natural Hygiene that whatever is introduced into or applied to the body, if it is to do good, to save and not destroy, must hold to the human body, relations that are naturally congenial, so that its influence, when taken in health, shall be good and not disease producing." He warned to all that would listen to him, "The effect of the swine flu program will range all the way from a mild and evanescent 'reaction' to immediate death."<sup>1</sup>

Later, when the danger and the folly of the swine flu program became obvious, hygienists thought they were making headway. But not for long. The biggest scandal in the history of the practice of Hygiene was soon to occur at Dr. Shelton's Health School.

The incident involved the death of forty-nine-year-old Hal Conrad who suffered from ulcerative colitis. In April of 1978 Conrad and his wife consulted a medical doctor in California. The physician strongly advised a complete colostomy and ileostomy which involves the removal of the large intestine of the lower bowel, an incision in the stomach area, and the attachment of a colostomy bag.

Conrad's friends at work introduced him to the concept of Natural Hygiene, rest, natural foods, and fasting. He read a dozen books on the subject and later chose to fast. When Conrad entered Dr.

<sup>1</sup> Herbert M. Shelton. "Cancer." *Review* (January 1978): 1.

Shelton's Health School he knew that the school was not operated by medical doctors and that it was not a hospital. He knew that drugs and surgery were contrary to the philosophy taught at the Health School.

Upon admission Vetrano took Conrad's history, and performed a physical examination. Conrad began his fast the second week in September. On September 28th Conrad had a fainting spell. Vetrano urged him to break the fast but he refused. Later it was reported to Vetrano that Conrad told a fellow faster, "I feel this is my best bet. I must do this or die." Vetrano was unable to get him to break his fast. Conrad was a determined individual who made his own decisions regardless of advice from hygienic practioners or medical doctors.

On October 7th Conrad complained of a slight pain in his chest. He finally broke his fast and Vetrano gave him nourishment. Three days later Conrad complained the pain in his chest had become worse. Vetrano called Hernandez, a medical doctor to whom she was referred by a surgeon of her acquaintance, and arranged for Conrad to be admitted to a San Antonio hospital.

Vetrano brought Conrad to the hospital at 2:45 p.m. and stayed with him until the physician arrived around 7:00 p.m. The physician stayed for about five minutes and left. Conrad died of a heart attack in the hospital the following day.<sup>2</sup>

Conrad's wife sued Shelton and Vetrano for \$890,000 on a charge of negligence. Shelton counter sued the hospital on a charge of negligence because Conrad had been dead three hours in the hospital before someone discovered he had died. It was all a messy ordeal, indeed.

One week, a local resident read the article titled, "Dieter's Death May Be Linked to Starvation." The next week they read, "Shelton Jury Still Confers," and still later they saw the news "Health School Faces Suit in Death" and "Witness: Patient Broke Eating Rule." The townspeople hoped that soon this degenerate establishment—the "Crazy House"—would be closed and forever put out of operation.

The suit and its accompanying publicity created an unnerving impact on both Shelton and Vetrano. The publicity surrounding the lawsuit did not stop the number of health seekers coming to the Health School. In fact, more people had come to the School than the year before. Fasters even agreed to fast outside in trailers

<sup>2</sup> Court of Criminal Appeals case documents 1983. The name of the Appellee has been fictionalized to retain privacy.

because the accommodations inside the School were filled. But Vetrano grew tired of the increasing demands and responsibilities at the School. She desired to practice Natural Hygiene independently.

Ten months had passed. Shelton said to Vetrano who had been employed at his school for fifteen years, "I will miss you. You have been my right hand. I wish you a whole basket full of good wishes for your success at your new school." Shelton knew he could not have Vetrano at his side forever. He knew their daily contact would end when Vetrano opened her own Chateau Des Sages (Castle of the Wise) Health School in Brownsville, Texas. Vetrano moved to Brownsville in March 1980.

Shelton interviewed new prospects to manage his school. Shortly thereafter, David Johnson and Craig Edland, the newly found managers, operated the School under the name Hygeia Natural Hygiene Institute. Shelton was employed as the head consultant concerning the clients and their illnesses; Norman Allard, D.C., assisted in supervising the fasters.

☞ The bad publicity associated with the lawsuit did not stop Shelton from dictating from his bed what he had to say about hygienic care. This was evident when I first had contact with Shelton in April 1980.

Prior to my arrival, Shelton had agreed to meet with me to document case reports from his sixty years experience in supervising fasts. For three years I had been working on a book called *Fasting for the Health of It*. The book described my improved asthmatic condition after fasting twenty-eight days at Dr. Scott's Health Institute in Cleveland, Ohio. The following are two examples of one hundred case reports that appear in the book. The initial diagnosis in these cases were made by a medical doctor. The hygienic doctor does not treat specific disease entities.

#### Dr. F.J. (Age 38)

*Advanced multiple sclerosis*

*Fasted: 14 days in 1954*

No two cases of multiple sclerosis are identical because in no two cases are the same parts of the brain and nervous system affected. In this particular case, Dr. J., an optometrist, gave up his work and turned his office over to someone else. He had said, "Previous drug treatments made me progressively worse" His condition was so severe that he had to be carried into the Health School. After a two-week fast and an additional five weeks at the Health School on a raw fruit and vegetable diet, Dr. J. so greatly

improved, walked out of the School under his own power.

### Ms. S.O. (Age 40)

*Alcoholism*

*Fasted: 26 days in 1960*

Sandra, a chronic alcoholic, had let her health slide. She would drink at the expense of eating, even substituting a drink for breakfast. Her neglect of family, friends and financial obligations represented the extreme of alcoholism.

Rarely is the cause purely physical. Sandra's circumstantial problems (loneliness and marital difficulties) contributed to her problem.

Following a Hygienic regime along with a membership in AA enabled her to recover in one year.

When it is recognized that alcoholism is a chronic illness, it will be easy to understand how and why fasting may be of service in the condition. It is a period of rest during which the much abused organism undergoes much-needed adjustments and repairs and recuperates its wasted energies. When the fast is ended and the system has been freed of its accumulated toxins, and what is even more important, the nervous system has been restored to health, the supposed craving for alcohol is no more.

Alcoholism is an illness involving structural abnormalities. The thickening and toughening of the membranes of the mouth, throat and stomach are necessary defensive expediences. Fatty degeneration of the liver or sclerosis of the liver are, of course, later developments. When the alcoholic fasts the thickened membranes are removed and new membranes are formed. The new membrane of the mouth, tongue, throat and stomach will not be a thickened, seared one, impervious alike to foods and poisons, but a thin, delicate and sensitive one that permits full appreciation of the fine delicate flavors of foods.

Glands and nerves that have been lashed into impotency by over-stimulation, rest into full functional power when given an opportunity. Renewal of their power can come in no better way.

Shelton and I made plans to add more case reports to the book from ten other hygienic doctors at a later date. I could easily see that his interest in co-authoring books or revising his old ones would never cease for as long as he lived. He also still produced new articles.

For the past fifty-two years nothing could deter Shelton from keeping the Health School in operation. At age eighty-four he was not ready or willing to close his seventh school on top "Mount Hygeia." No, at least not at the same time when he would retire from publishing his monthly *Dr. Shelton's Hygienic Review*.

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### CLOSING THE HEALTH SCHOOL

The last issue of *Dr. Shelton's Hygienic Review* appeared in the summer of 1980. After forty-one years of service Shelton regretted having to say to his sixteen hundred readers, "I enjoyed every minute of time I have devoted to my monthly visits to the homes of my readers. I will miss my work, but I must say good-bye".

Shelton did not retire completely from promoting hygienic principles. He kept the doors open to what was now called The Hygeia Natural Hygiene Institute while he continued to answer all questions from health seekers who wrote to him needing his advice. Without asking for a fee, he dictated his responses to his secretary and all who contacted Shelton received a prompt reply.

☞ On July 12, 1980, the day I arrived in San Antonio to continue working with Shelton on *Fasting for the Health of It*,<sup>1</sup> he was at work supplying a foreword to a reprint of Sylvester Graham's six-hundred-page volume *The Science of Human Life*. He was also updating *The Science and Fine Art of Food and Nutrition*. He put these projects aside while he and I continued to compile a list of one hundred case reports to include in the book. Cases dated from the years 1927-1980. Shelton's associates, in addition to Vetrano, who contributed cases from their files were sent to us from Doctors Benesh, Brosious, Sidhwa, Gross, Scott, Burton, Coumentakis, Cinque, Sabatino and Allard. The experiences from a total of eleven hygienic doctors were documented from over 200,000 fasts.

The following are three examples of such cases. The initial diagnosis was made by a medical doctor.

*Contributed by Dr. Keki Sidhwa from Essex, England:*

### Mr. E.B. (Age 51)

*Cerebral stroke*

*Fasted 25 days in 1972*

Twenty-four hours before entering Shalimar Health Home, Ed had a cerebral stroke that affected his face, tongue, eyes and both limbs on the left side. Ed fasted twenty-five days and recovered completely except for a slight limp. Since then, he fasts eight to

<sup>1</sup> To order *Fasting for the Health of It* see page iv.

ten days every two years to control his high blood pressure and his tendency to put on weight. His blood pressure in 1972 was 200/135. In 1981, his blood pressure remains at 150/90.

*Contributed by Dr. Ralph Cinque from Yorktown, Texas:*

**Ms. I.F. (Age 45)**

*Uterine fibroid*

*Fasted: 14 days in 1976*

Irene's fibroid tumor was the size of an orange. She fasted fourteen days, and the tumor could no longer be felt. The surgeons who had recommended immediate surgery were astounded, as they had predicted Irene's rapid decline under Dr. Cinque's care.

*Contributed by Dr. Frank Sabatino from Bonita Springs, Florida:*

**Ms. T.H. (Age 62)**

*Chronic lymphatic leukemia*

*Fasted: 21 days in 1979*

Tanya came to Shangri-la Natural Hygiene Institute with a ten-month history of daily low grade fevers and was extremely exhausted. Within three days of fasting, her temperature normalized and did not occur again during or after her fast.

On arrival her white blood count was 63,000. The results of her fasting blood studies are as follows:

	<b>Normal Range</b>	<b>Eighth day Fasting</b>	<b>Twenty-first Day</b>
<i>Cholesterol</i>	150-250	315	243
<i>Triglycerides</i>	10-110 plus age	232	142
<i>Uric Acid</i>	2-7	7.6	5.6
<i>White blood count</i>	5,000-10,000	38,000	13,000

The higher numbers in the eighth day blood study indicates the primary stress factors in her liver and kidney systems. As the fast progressed, her blood count improved while her energy vastly increased.

Dr. Sabatino saw Tanya six months after her fast and observed that Tanya controls her white blood count and maintains vitality by adhering to a totally raw hygienic diet.

After the work on the case reports was completed Shelton and I discussed his life's accomplishments. Curiously I asked him questions because I admired his courage and integrity. I once asked him how many deaths had occurred while people were fasting under

his care. Between the years 1925 and 1970, he said that three people had died.

I thought this number was low because I considered Shelton had supervised over thirty-five thousand fasts. Many of his clients came to him that had been seriously ill and had tried nearly all other modes of care before entering his school. Fasting was often the last resort. One can be sure, however, if a person dies under hygienic care, the news will be given great exposure.

I then asked Shelton what was the longest fast he had undertaken. He answered, "My longest fast was twenty-nine days in 1934. Thereafter I periodically fasted ten days. All fasts were taken for general health improvement."

I wondered what was the longest length of time he had spent in jail. He answered, "Thirty days in New York City in 1934. It was the only time I took a vacation. My vacation was paid for by the State of New York."

"Did you fast twenty-nine days in jail?"

He smiled and said, "Yes."

"Dr. Shelton, when you were arrested in New York City, were you disturbing the peace?"

"I guess so. I gave the medical profession nightmares." He laughed and then corrected himself: "I was arrested for practicing medicine without a license in New York City, not for disturbing the peace."

Shelton and I discussed several details about his life. At the time I was unaware that in ten months to come I would begin work on his life's story.

Later, after I returned home, I received news that the Hygeia Natural Hygiene Institute closed on April 30, 1981. Johnson had sought other employment. Shelton moved to the family residence on Marcia Place in Alamo Heights to spend his remaining days with his wife. Letters of regrets that Shelton's school was closed were received there from all over the world.

At home in Alamo Heights, Shelton was never without visitors bringing gifts and informing him about how the principles of Natural Hygiene were being promoted in the eighties. Shelton's first out of state visitor, beside myself, included his co-worker, Dr. Christopher Gian-Cursio<sup>2</sup> from New York. Those living in the state of Texas who kept Shelton informed of news included T.C. Fry, founder of the Life

<sup>2</sup> Between the years 1939-1981 Dr. Christopher Gian-Cursio had supervised over 35,000 fasts. Gian-Cursio never retired and diligently promoted Hygiene until his death on July 25, 1985 at age seventy-five.

Science Institute in Austin, co-worker, Dr. Vivian Vetrano, and Dr. Ralph Cinque. Cinque, a graduate from Western State Chiropractic College, completed his internship at Dr. Shelton's Health School in 1976. Cinque was now proprietor of his own Hygeia Health School in Yorktown, Texas.

Family members living in Texas that came to see Shelton included his sister, Juanita, from Houston and his brother Sam who managed a barber shop in Dallas. By September 1981 only three members of the Mitch Shelton family were living—Herbert the oldest, Sam the tenth child and Juanita the thirteenth and youngest child. Shelton's mother and father and all other brothers and sisters were deceased. Shelton's father died at age seventy-eight in 1945. Mitch Shelton had been medically diagnosed as having cancer of the prostate in 1935. Mitch had been a skeptic toward the philosophy of Natural Hygiene until he himself was near death. He then took a series of fasts under Shelton's care. Shelton believed his father's life was prolonged by ten years when he adapted a hygienic lifestyle. Shelton's mother died in 1959. Fanny was eighty-two when she died from complications after breaking her hip. Shelton's youngest brother Eugene died in a military plane crash in 1961. Eugene was forty-two. In the 1970's two of Shelton's brothers and one sister died. Zack had cancer when he died at age sixty-five in 1974. Lee Roy, age seventy-five, died in a fire at home in 1975. His death was reported as accidental. Shelton's sister, Willie, died at age seventy-four in 1977. Willie had suffered with pemphigus, a skin disorder, in which she had fasted twice to alleviate her suffering.

I was with Herbert Shelton on each occasion when he was informed that his two sisters had died. Both died within months apart in 1981. Alta May died at age eighty-four and Grace was nearly seventy when she died. Grace had been medically diagnosed as having cancer.

Herbert Shelton told me that occasionally his brothers and sisters would discuss a particular health problem with him; however, for the most part, his brothers and sisters chose conventional life-styles. Shelton was the first born yet he survived those born after him. Without question Shelton knew that by following his hygienic program of healthful living, he was prolonging his own life.

Shelton did just as he had said in his *Review* many years before: "I will promote the principles of Natural Hygiene until my last dying breath." And that he did. In October 1982, Dr. Shelton, author and nutritionalist Jo Willard (President of Natural Hygiene, Inc.) and

myself began work on *The Original Natural Hygiene Weight Loss Diet Book*. The project was to become his last book.

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### LETTERS TO ALAMO HEIGHTS, TEXAS

While Shelton resided with his wife at home, he received over six hundred letters and many cards, particularly birthday cards, in his last years. Some of the correspondence was from former clients, co-workers or doctors who had been influenced by him; and some from those who never met him but knew of him through his writings or lectures, or by their membership in a hygienic organization. Regardless, most all had a message to give him! They loved him and wanted him to know that his humanitarian efforts had not been spent in vain.

The following are excerpts taken from the hundreds of letters Shelton received:

Despite my age of eighty-six I am still quite active. My sixty years of following a hygienic program have paid off well for me in terms of longevity and well being. My father and older brother both died at the age of seventy. I feel that I have been living on borrowed time for sixteen years.

ROBERT ALBERS, New York City, New York

My late grandfather, H.I. Joshi, was Mahatma Gandhi's first follower who regained his health through fasting and following Gandhi's example of natural living. Both my grandfather and father followed Natural Hygiene up until their last breath and both died peacefully of old age. Thus my family is grateful to you for your Natural Hygiene literature. I am presently engaged in propagating Natural Hygiene in many magazines in India.

Thank you my dear reverend father for your golden service to this great cause.

INDRAVADAN P. JOSHI, Gujerat State, India

I personally know that, on the important subject of health, we live in a sea of lies, and slanted commercialized propaganda. We who have had the good fortune to become familiar with your writings can appreciate the mental anguish that goes along with deprogramming oneself and unlearning all the falsehoods. We

indeed find solance in knowing that we are not alone in being confused by conventional thinking and living habits.

DAVID STRY, Cuernavaca, Mexico

I hope someday you will be recognized as one of the greatest health educators of all time.

DR. JACK MEGA, New York City, New York

It gives me tremendous satisfaction to know that I have walked this earth at the same time as you. I believe in every century a personality arises on the surface of the earth who is destined to change the course of life for many people in that era. In this twentieth century that person is you. Your purpose is to disseminate health truths that have saved the lives of thousands. You leave us a legacy of your voluminous writings that will have great influence on the lives of countless numbers in the future.

DR. GERALD BENESH, Escondido, California

I can't believe how 'right on target' you have been in your writing. Your predictions of the outcome of so many circumstances were proven totally accurate.

DR. RALPH CINQUE, Yorktown, Texas

Rose and I want you to know that we consider you our first and most truthful teacher. We have loved every moment of your talks, your writings and your witticisms. You have been an era in your self. And, we love you for it . . . and like us, in Hygiene organizations around the globe, recognize the blood, sweat and energy you gave to the cause of Hygiene, that it remain pure to the end. We will try to follow your path, and keep it that way, to seek the truth, though the heavens fall.

ROSE AND LEE BAUER, Kailua, Hawaii

Nobody realizes more than I do the enervating impact of the stresses and pressures imposed by harassing authorities and the fundamental moral injustices of the current socio-political order.

It will be a long time indeed before *Hygiene* acquires the prestige and honor it is due. In the meantime, we all have to struggle against the enormous commercial and social forces which support the industries that profit from the sick.

You and your magazine have done more than any other institution to promulgate the truth about health, disease and healing.

DR. ALEC BURTON, New South Wales, Australia

You have the gift of inspiring others, Dr. Shelton. Thank you for doing what you do and for being who you are.

JOY GROSS, Hyde Park, New York

I frequently find a spare moment in our Life Science publications office for selecting articles from your prior issues of the *Review*. I never cease to be amazed at the genius and insight that you exhibit in your writings. You have mastered the science health.

T.C. FRY, Austin, Texas

"My Bible" since the birth of my two children has been your book on child care. Because of you and your work I did not spend my time sitting for hours in a physician's office as I had seen many other mother's do and accept as all part of raising children.

PAULA DUVAL, Portage, Indiana

I admire the tremendous energy you have put forth to spread the principles of Hygiene. You have influenced my life and my work more than any other person.

DR. FRANK SABATINO, Atlanta, Georgia

The more I learn from your great work, the more I want to apply it to my life. Most of us have yet to realize the full scope of the priceless contribution of health research you have bestowed, or the extent of those ramifications on the future of life as we know it can be.

RANDY WILLIAMS, North Hollywood, California

I want to assure you that I will try and carry on what you kept alive all these years.

DR. PANAYOTIS COUMENTAKIS, Attici, Greece

Your life constitutes a blessing to the world. You have given selflessly, tirelessly and endlessly in the service of and enlightenment of an impoverished, needy humanity. No one could have been more scientifically accurate and rigid in his adherence to



principle while remaining emotionally flexible than yourself. Through your example of fidelity to principle, your teachings and your writings, you have left all of us a legacy.

ATT. MARK HUBERMAN, Youngstown, Ohio

I believe you must be pleased to know that somewhere today a child is being born healthy and normal because of your pioneering work on warning women about the dangers of drug use during pregnancy. I was one who heeded your warnings while I was pregnant.

My healthy daughter and myself will remain forever grateful to you.

MONIQUE AKERLEY, Montreal, Canada

Few have ever given so much to so many, for so long. In centuries to come, as the world at large awakens to the quality and scope of the magnificent contributions you bestowed upon it for the benefit of all, your work will shine as a brilliant beacon light.

H. JAY DINSHAH, Malaga, New Jersey

It was multiple sclerosis and desperation which caused me to study your writings. Page after page spoke about strength, convictions, courage, morals, options and awareness. Reading your work has freed me from the fear of disease, fear of life's mysteries, fear of authority and fear of God. Thank you for showing me the way to self-reliance and for giving me hope. Thank you for giving me a new rebirth of my life.

HELEN LAMAR, Ben Lomand, California

You never compromised truth for personal gain. I believe your name will live forever.

JOE AARON, Ontario, Canada

Although many acknowledged Shelton's efforts and gave kind words of appreciation,<sup>1</sup> to some, whether or not he really contributed beneficially to humanity became a debatable matter. The matter was debated for hours before the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit in New Orleans, Louisiana, in September 1983. Here, a \$890,000 verdict was brought against Shelton and Vetrano

<sup>1</sup> On Shelton's eighty-ninth birthday, he received over eight hundred dollars from those who knew he was bankrupt.

who had been found guilty of negligence in the care of the late Hal Conrad who had died in a hospital after leaving Dr. Shelton's Health School in 1978. The Plaintiff characterized Shelton and Vetrano as "clairvoyant physicians motivated by greed" who reached out to those patients whose reason became clouded at the prospect of facing radical and irreversible surgery. Dr. Shelton's Health School was described as an establishment that employed "magnetic healers" who prescribed "magical remedies such as hot and cold packs, pineapple juice, laxatives and enemas." (Laxatives, enemas, hot and cold packs were not employed at his school.) To recognize Dr. Shelton's Health School and his mode of care as valid would simply "plunge medical science back into the Dark Ages."<sup>2</sup>

Shelton and Vetrano attempted to appeal the Conrad case before the Supreme Court. In July 1984 the Supreme Court declined the appeal.

These were four of several responses to Shelton when they learned he and Vetrano had not been given the opportunity to appeal the Conrad case.

I doubt the Conrad case was clearly presented or things would have not worked out as they did. People just do not understand that in the midst of so much confusion your teachings have become literally a saviour to so many who have adopted the hygienic plan of living. I'm sorry the road to present the truth has not been an easy one for you.

SOPHIE HOLZGREEN, Los Angeles, California

Kate and I were unhappy to hear the final verdict. We deplore the fact that you and Doctors Trall, Jennings and Tilden had to sacrifice so many years of good productive life fighting against establishment thought and adversity.

DR. BERNARD AND KATE SHARP, Milwaukee Wisconsin

I wrote a long letter to Chief Justice William Horn and told him that I did not agree with the verdict. I explained in detail the wonderful contribution you have made to the world. I sent him a copy of *Fasting Can Save Your Life* and told him about a man whom I fasted with while I was at your Health School in 1951. The man was carried in on a stretcher with gangrene in his very swollen leg. A discharge ran down his leg from three places. The

<sup>2</sup> Correspondence from Attorney Mark A. Huberman to the American Natural Hygiene Society members, 11 October 1983.

man told me that two surgeons said his leg must be amputated to save his life. Instead of submitting himself to medical care he turned to hygienic care. After a forty-four day fast and two weeks on the hygienic diet, he walked out of your school on two perfect legs. The man had no money. You knew this and cared for him without receiving or expecting a nickle in return. I told Horn that this was just one of seemingly miraculous cases that I saw and just one of many thousands, internationally under the care of hygienic practitioners, whose lives have been saved or helped by Natural Hygiene.

I do not know what good it will do but if Horn reads all I sent him, he will at least learn something about the wonderful work you have done in bringing the sick back to health.

MYRTLE MATERA, Landrum, South Carolina

For the past thirteen years I have been producing a weekly radio show (and now TV shows) carrying the message, of Natural Hygiene, teaching nature's laws as you have so eloquently enunciated them.

How many millions have been touched by your tireless efforts, we will never know, yet like all pioneers, the price of your labors has been costly. It takes courage and anguish before pioneers are legitimized. Like Socrates, Galileo, Max Gerson, homeopaths, naturopaths, natural hygienists and hundreds of others, you too, have been paying the high price of all pioneers exposing the system that keeps people from health and from knowledge. These trials and tribulations must be viewed in their historic context—as seeds of change, as seeds of growth. Persecution and prosecution of pioneers has been the policy of the so called establishment order of each historic period. Out of historic necessity the new voice prevails. Their ideas are eventually adopted and society moves into a new age of enlightenment.

JO WILLARD, Shelton, Connecticut

☞ On August 28, 1984, the last time I saw Dr. Shelton, I re-read to him these excerpts which I intended to place at the conclusion of his life's story. Riffing through several letters still in my hands, I commented, "You've inspired and given hope to so many people. You've instilled a sense of security in people's hearts and minds and have freed many from the fear that disease is something over which there is entirely no control. Your work enriches the world by bringing peace to its people."

Having received permission to use the quotations I had read him, I

placed into my purse two dozen letters which I planned to study more carefully later at home in Milwaukee. It was nearing time to leave but I lingered to share once more my attempt to understand Dr. Shelton's own reaction to his life's achievements.

I remarked, "Your outlook has always been optimistic, Dr. Shelton. Do you still maintain a positive outlook for the future?"

He replied, "Yes. More than ever before, the American people are taking responsibility for their own health. There is a greater awareness that health and disease are not the result of chance, but depend on the operation of certain demonstrable laws. I believe one day hygienic principles will be understood and applied nationally and internationally."

Then I said, "I like your gutsy way of meeting life. Your life is more significant than the lives of most. You kept many from going to their graves prematurely. You must feel satisfied with your accomplishments."

He answered, "There's still so much to do. So much that I would like to do . . . but I can't."

"You mean you're not satisfied with what you've accomplished?"

"No. I should have done much more." Shelton had always said he wanted to live to be one hundred years of age provided he could still be useful to promote hygienic principles in whatever way he could.

Shelton's labors reminded me of those of Sisyphus who rolled his heavy stone daily to the top of the hill only to find the boulder awaiting him at the bottom again each day. Shelton was bankrupt. He had lost his school as the result of the lawsuit. He even had had to sell his collection of rare hygienic books in order to make ends meet. Yet his desire to continue helping humanity, his lust for life, his enthusiasm to start anew were still present; only physical strength was lacking. Although his mind was razor sharp, his body lacked vitality. I could only hope that we would see each other again.

Instead of saying good-bye I said, "I'll see you early in 1985, 'Sandbur.'"

"I hope so," Shelton responded as we embraced.

And before we parted he said to me: "Remember I am but a passing incident, Jean. The laws of life hold valid principles and the truths and practices that rest upon these will last an eternity."

**WORKS BY DR. SHELTON**

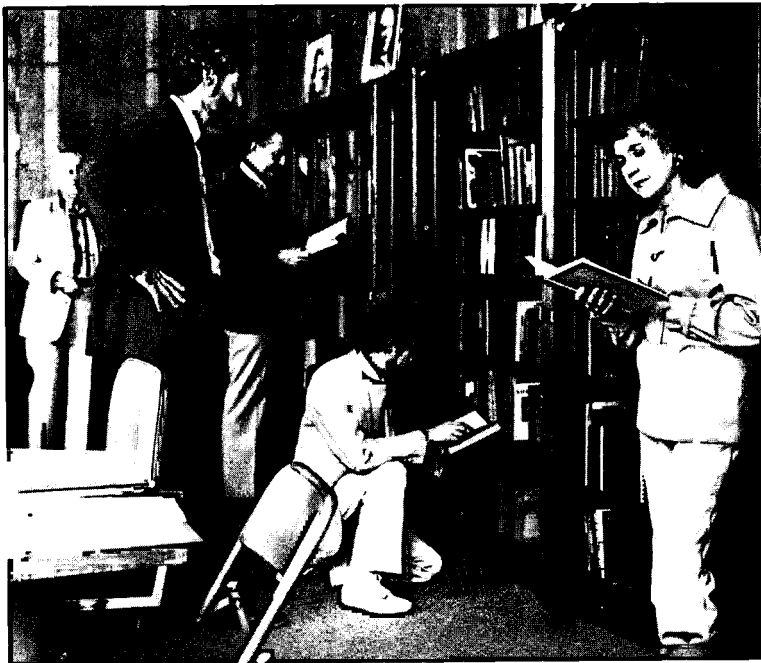
- |                                                                       |                                                                                          |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
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| <i>Orthotrophy: The Natural Diet of Man</i> , 1930                    | <i>Recovery</i> , 1953                                                                   |
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*I was born in a storm and for the most part I have lived in a storm all of my life.*

HERBERT M. SHELTON

## EPILOGUE

Dr. Herbert M. Shelton, in his ninetieth year, died peacefully in his sleep, at home in the presence of his family on January 1, 1985. A record-breaking snowstorm closed all the main highways in San Antonio and in Alamo Heights, Texas, on the eve of his funeral on January 3, 1985. At Chapel Hill Memorial Gardens in San Antonio, his headstone is marked with the inscription: "*Let Us Have the Truth Though the Heavens Fall.*"



1989: The Herbert M. Shelton Library located in Tampa, Florida, commemorates his life's work. Dr. Shelton also collected over 2,500 books on health in his lifetime.



Dr. Shelton's memory lives on at the annual American Natural Hygiene Conventions and at various other national and international hygienic meetings.

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