

DR. IDA

To be born a Scudder is mandate enough, but to be born Ida Scudder ... well - I just didn't have a chance. You see, the Scudders have been missionaries to India for 4 generations and, some of them, medical missionaries. My great-grandfather, Dr. John Scudder, was the first American doctor to ever go to India. All of his sons and one daughter went. My father, who was born in India, couldn't be a missionary because it was felt his health was not good enough. But two of his brothers went and his sister, Ida...Dr. Ida. So, as I said - when I was born and named Ida Scudder - I guess my life was pre-ordained! (chuckle) I didn't have a chance!

My whole name is Ida Belle Sophia Scudder - but I was called Ida B. when I became a doctor - to differentiate from my aunt, Dr. Ida. I had two older brothers, Ernest and Walter, then there was me, then Mildred - oh that darling little Mildred. She died at 11 months old - the whooping cough! Oh, we were so heartbroken. Her little grave is in a cemetery on top of the hill overlooking the Winnebago Indian Reservation in Nebraska. Oh yes, I was born in Nebraska - Shelton, Nebraska. That's right - Shelton - not Emerson although that's what's on my passport. You see, when I went to India, the place of my birth was needed for passport information. Since no records were found, and because my father, who was a Presbyterian minister and who served in so many small towns in Nebraska, - well he and mother had moved so much - they certified that I was born in Emerson!

Well, now I was telling you about my family. Later on, after Mildred died, another sister was born. Her name? Lillian. Many of you know her, since she and her husband, Charlie Fish, lived ^{here} for almost 25 years and were members of First Church, before they, and I, moved to Pleasant Hill, Tennessee.

Now, where was I? Oh, yes .. Lillian. Mother and Father called her "the afterthought" - she was born six years after me! I called her, "Little Miss No, You"! It seemed every time I asked Lillian to do a household chore, the answer was always - you guessed it - "No, you"!

Since Father was a minister, we always lived near the church and our life revolved around it and its activities. Oh, how I loved the hymns. ~~One of my~~ ^{Well, I love Be Thou My Vision and there's another that means a lot to me} favorites. ~~And~~ (pause for tape) And, of course, there was always the weekly Wednesday night prayer meeting. Mother and Father would always have to rush off after dinner, leaving the dishes for Lillian and me to do. Well, neither of us liked to wash, but because I was the older and Lillian would make such a mess, we would go through the following scenario every week: "Well, I'd better wash" - "No, let me wash" - "Of course not, I'll have to wash. You wipe" - "I want to wash!" - "Now, now I'm washing" Well! Before you knew it - my patience was at its end. And I'd give my little sister a little smack she well deserved! Ohhh. did she cry! And cry! And then sulk. And sulk! And, of course, the ritual would always end - right before prayer meeting was over - with my doing both jobs - with Lillian promising not to tell Mother I hit her! (chuckle) Oh, those were the days!

When I was six years old, we moved to the territory of Oklahoma. And it was there we lived in many towns and I went to many schools. I graduated from high school there. As it happened, I was always coming out at the top of my class - every time. And since I was doing very little to achieve this, and since I was no Albert Einstein, my father became very uneasy, and decided that perhaps Oklahoma schools weren't all they should have been, and that perhaps I needed more schooling - in the east. We happened to be moving back east at this time and I was to go to Northfield Seminary in Massachusetts. Unfortunately, this was the time of a big flu epidemic and I got sick right off, and missed most of my schooling that first year. So I was there for 3 years, instead of the one or two years I had planned. After Northfield, I went to Mount Holyoke College

and, in my senior year here, I decided to become a doctor. After Holyoke, I went to the Women's Medical College in Pennsylvania. And after that, an internship at the Albany Medical College. I was planning to go into Pediatrics - and since around this time, I needed some money, I went to work for the Children's Community in New Haven. I was there when I got word of an urgent need in Vellore, India where my aunt, Dr. Ida was. Well, off I went and was there for five years. I still intended to be a Pediatrician, but while I was there I was told that Vellore needed a Radiologist. Well, now radiology hadn't entered my mind at all, and it certainly was not what I expected to do. But that was the need. I went back to the States where I took some courses and did clinical training in radiotherapy, but then I went to England, because I thought the staff at Vellore might prefer British qualifications - the medical school was becoming a medical college at this time. So I spent a year working in London but taking the examinations in Cambridge and finally acquiring the diploma in Medical Radiology and Electrolgy of Cambridge University. So back I went to Vellore a Radiologist. I never had any regrets. I was glad, however, I had 5 years of general medicine before hand.

But back to my first impressions on my first arrival in India. Hot - hot - and hotter! On my arrival, I was met by my aunt at the Hill Station in Kodai Kanal. Since it was summer and her holiday time, she was not in Vellore, but at her vacation home here in Kodai Kanal. I remember so well the oppressive heat when I disembarked from the train and there was Dr. Ida waiting for me, fanning, fanning away. As we were waiting for my baggage to appear, she kept saying, "Jeldi, Jeldi!" - that means, "Hurry, hurry!" - "Let's get out of this heat." I remember thinking to myself, that if she has lived here all these years and she finds it hot too, I expect I'll survive.

Then we got into the car and off we went up into the hills. Oh, it was so beautiful and the higher we went up, the cooler the air became. By the time

we reached Hill Top, her house there, we were wearing sweaters! Her house commanded views from all sides and there was the most wonderful fragrance from the Eucalyptus trees and her garden. What a contrast! - my journey with the oppressive heat, the smells, the crowds, the noise - and here I was in this beautiful setting with its cooling breezes. I wrote home, "I came through Hell to Heaven!".

Now - one of the first things I had to do there was to study the language, Tamil. I had a special tutor for this. I had no ~~aptitude~~ for languages in the first place - and Tamil is very difficult. I thought I would never learn it! Now, when I first went to Vellore, my first assignment ~~was~~ to help out in an Ear, Nose and Throat clinic - the thing I knew least about! It was a challenge, but I had a good nurse - I'll never forget her - Sundari. Sundari was also my interpreter. After a little while, my Tamil got good enough to realize that sometimes she was telling the patients something quite different from what I'd said! And - she was usually right! (chuckle)

At Vellore, my work would shift from one field to another. I taught anatomy one year - and this was so difficult - because, you see, I was taking over for a teacher who was on a furlough. And because the students were used to her methods, and I was pretty uncertain of myself at that stage - I have no doubt I was a pretty poor teacher. And after that, when the Obstetrician was away, I did Obstetrics! It was wonderful training for me. But, oh, it was hard work.

Fortunately, I had one escape - horseback riding. I think if that were kept from me, I would have gone insane. There was a police school there in Vellore that had horses, and the head of the school, an Englishman, allowed some of us to come one day a week to ride. On my riding day I'd get in the car and as I'd drive out and approach the hospital gate, I'd always pray, "Dear Lord, don't let anybody call me. Let me get through the gate." - because, once I'd cleared the gate, I was free for two hours. And that horseback riding was just what I needed. It would

shake some sense back into me. And I could go back, able to bear another week!

And, of course, there were spiritual resources. The medical school was a Christian medical school and we had regular morning prayer for both students and faculty. In the hospital chapel too, there were regular morning prayers for the staff - at 6:45! And we had one Monday morning tradition at both the school and hospital chapel - - the Love Chapter was read - that's right: I Corinthians 13. This was the ideal that guided us - hopefully - through the week (pause): "Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking...." Ahhhh, beautiful words. And the tradition still carries on today.

On Sundays there were both morning and evening chapel services. The morning services were held in the languages of the patients - Tamil or Tel. The evening service, in English.

Music was also a special part of life in Vellore. We had good choirs at both the school and hospital. Mostly western music was sung but sometimes there were occasions when different language groups would sing their own music - (tape) Often, there would be as many as ten languages being sung!

There were many milestones during my work in India. One of the most memorable was when we upgraded our Missionary Medical School for Women into the Christian Medical College. This was done in 1942. The war was going on, we were almost completely cut off from the States - it was a hard time - so short on staff - many people away in the army. But we went ahead and started the college. At that time, we were still admitting only women, but in 1947 we began allowing men to enroll. There were 10 men and about 250 women that year - I think the only medical school in the world with that proportion!

There is a reason why our school was for women only. And that was the reason why my aunt, Dr. Ida, went to India as a doctor. You see, in those days,

so many Indian women were dying in childbirth - and it was so unnecessary! Their husbands would not allow their wives to be seen by a man! That was simply too much for my Aunt - she became a doctor and went back to India. And after awhile, she, and some foreign missionary women doctors realized that the Indian women themselves must be trained in medicine. Thus, the school started - in 1918. And in '42 became a college and in '47 admitted men. The Vellore Christian Medical School, now affiliated with Madras University, is one of the leading medical colleges in India today and is known all over the East.

And, I'm proud to say the radiology department has grown along with the school. It is now a diversified center for radio-therapy attracting patients from all over India. I'm also pleased, and proud, (modestly) that the Ida B. Scudder Isotope Laboratory was dedicated in 1967 at the college. (a shy smile)

I left India permanently in 1970, although I've been back to visit. The college and hospital are in good hands. They are now run by a completely Indian faculty and staff. When I left, there was a farewell to-do for me, and one of the speakers said, "This is the end of an era" - you see, because I was the last Scudder to work in India. But my answer to him was, "It's the beginning of a new era now; you don't need Scudders and westerners any more."

I'm very pleased and very proud.



