

IV cont.

and the big house which looked like a castle with its big inner courtyard surrounded by a ~~wall~~ high wall.- Nearby was our cow grazing placidly, there were the shy guleeris (the little grey squirrels in the trees) there were the lazy lizards and the cheeky crows. In the corner of one of the big verandas of the house, were two carpenters sitting, busy with making a chest of drawers, <sup>for the father</sup> and the other painting the baby-bed. In another corner the Dherzi-the tailor-was sitting busy with his machine.

Everybody smiled, everybody was friendly, everything was peaceful and kind. My heart was filled with happiness and tears came to my eyes. I was home again.

5 weeks later our little daughter was born-not in Patiala where there was only a Zenana hospital (where men were not allowed and where Kashy would not have been able to visit me and which, moreover, was rather primitive), but in <sup>the</sup> modern Lady Wellington Hospital in Lahore with English doctors and nurses.

I went there a week in advance and stayed with some friends. One usually does <sup>- when going from abroad</sup> and the term friends includes also casual acquaintances. It is very seldom that one goes to a hotel in a place where one has friends or distant relatives. It would be considered almost an offence.

We called our baby Mandita and she was, I am sure the first child with the name of Kashyap whose birth was actually registered and who possesses a birth certificate. There are no rules and regulations about birth-, marriage- and death-certificates, though nowadays modern Indian parents get their children's birth registered.- Kashy e.g. has only a horoscope written in Sanscrit, which serves him as birth-certificate when he has to prove his age.

Well, to come back to our little Dita. We gave her the name Mandita, its meaning is "joy giving" in Bengali. (Kashy's family is Punjabi and were probably astonished that we did not choose a Punjabi name. I had found this one in a story by Rabindranath Tagore and had liked it.)

When Dita was 12 days old we went home to Patiala where she spent the first one and a half years of her life. Everybody was astonished that we did not engage an Aya, a woman to look after the child. These were still the old good times before the war, prices were low, servants cheap, we could have easily have afforded one, but I did not want to be deprived of the pleasure of looking after my baby myself.