

Ethel Crawshaw (Morland)

HER LIBRARY SERVICE, 1903-1926

WITH the appointment in 1901 of Norman Penney to be the first full-time librarian of the Society of Friends, the possibility of a much fuller use of the library (then at Devonshire House) was becoming clear, provided its largely untouched accumulations of over two centuries could be reduced to better order and to full accessibility by means of adequate cataloguing and the progressive filling of gaps in the collection. Within two years the librarian's need of an assistant was urgent.

Ethel Crawshaw was appointed to the post in 1903, and she made the library her work and interest for twenty-three years. She entered fully into Norman Penney's aims and learned his methods, sharing in the busy correspondence at home and abroad, sharing also the steady work at the great arrears of cataloguing, which were, year by year, reduced, as the catalogue grew from small beginnings to some 50,000 cards under their joint efforts. The card catalogue quickly became and was always maintained as the central point of reference for all information, whether the location of a book or the clue to some obscure person, fact, or event come across in the perennial task of indexing the works on the shelves, or in the course of other work; the result was a very important factor in the standing which the library gained.

Whereas Norman Penney was reserved by nature and most at home among books, Ethel Crawshaw excelled in making friendly contacts; and she was able to make especially her own the work of meeting the needs of the growing number of readers. She made enquirers welcome and encouraged them to feel that the library staff was there to hear what the reader's needs were and to satisfy them if possible, an attitude she inculcated in other assistants and successors. If the library has had this reputation in later years, it was originally due to the example of Ethel Crawshaw.

The Friends' Historical Society has always owed much to the hospitality of the library and to the help of the staff in getting the society's office work done. In a secretarial capacity Ethel Crawshaw for many years ably seconded the

work of Norman Penney who edited the *Journal*; and she used her opportunities to secure new members or contributors among library readers and correspondents.

During most of her years in the library the staff was a small team working closely with the librarian, two or three, or occasionally four, in all. Her knowledge and effectiveness grew therefore as her experience lengthened, so that when Norman Penney on account of ill-health retired from active direction of the library in 1921, Ethel Crawshaw was appointed librarian.

In this position she was able to maintain fully the policy entered upon twenty years before, and to provide valuable continuity when changes, unthought-out or not based on experience of the work the library was doing, might have been detrimental. During her librarianship the Society's decision was made to leave Devonshire House, and plans were made for the removal to Friends House, which took place in 1925. At that stage of inevitable changes Ethel Crawshaw shared her responsibility generously with the present writer who had been appointed an assistant in 1921 to succeed her in due course as librarian.

Throughout her years of service to the Society in the library, Ethel Crawshaw stood for loyalty, for being of service, and for friendliness in all her dealings. She regularly supported the week-day morning meeting for worship for the staff, held in the library in Devonshire House days, and later at Friends House. Her ability to make friends, from the youngest to the oldest among her fellow-workers, was a valued gift which helped to draw together those working in the offices of the various committees.

In 1926 Ethel Crawshaw left her work to be married to Alfred Morland. She continued to attend the Library Committee for several years, as an appointed member, after having in practice acted as its secretary for many years; and she kept her interest in the library to the end of her life. Ethel Morland survived her husband two years, and died on March 10th, 1960.

JOHN NICKALLS