

Settling in.

At Mrs. Shakespear's house, Ezra met her daughter, Dorothy, who had been educated at a Hampshire boarding school with a year of finishing at Geneva, since when she had had nothing to do but accompany her mother on social engagements, paint water colours, read, and write letters to cousins and school friends. She had inherited her mother's classic Victorian beauty but from her father she had acquired a considerable reserve. Ezra visited their house on many occasions. Mrs. Shakespear complained mildly of his untidy boots but Dorothy protested in her notebook that one could not notice such a thing "when there is his moving, beautiful face to watch".

Ezra's small book of poems "Personae" appeared in April and was reviewed within a matter of days. The Evening Standard and St. James Gazette decided that "Mr. Pound is a poet, though a fantastic one". The Daily Telegraph remarked that his name sounded rather comic but thought that the book contained a thread of beauty. After this, he was encouraged by a friend to contact a newly established magazine, the English Review, which was being run from a flat above a fish monger's shop. Its editor was Ford Maddox Ford, the son of a German born music critic and an English mother who was the daughter of the Pre Raphaelite painter Ford Maddox Brown. Ford was just the friend and supporter that Ezra needed in his attempts to make a name for himself in London. Ford seemed to know everyone in the literary establishment. His new magazine was a startling success, thanks to Ford's simple expedient of printing in the first six issues new work by such established names as Thomas Hardy, Henry James, Galsworthy and H G Wells. As Ford and Ezra got on quite well, Ezra soon joined these famous names in the magazine with some of his poems. His social and literary life and connections expanded, largely through the help of Matthews who introduced him to Ernest Rhys, founder of the Everyman series who took him under his wing and introduced him to many more interesting people. He was invited to a dinner of the newly established poets club where Hilaire Belloc would be one of the attractions. George Bernard Shaw was there too, but Ezra found the whole affair boring as it was more a discussion of novels than poetry.

The other members of the Club considered Ezra to be a picturesque addition to the group. One said of him "he struck me as a bit of a charlatan and I disliked the showy blue glass buttons on his coat; indeed his whole bohemian outfit looked like it came out of Puccini." But another said; "he struck me as an amiable, distinguished, somewhat opinionated gentleman". When he declaimed poetry apparently "his Philadelphian accent was comprehensible if disconcerting; he was astonishingly agile and would throw himself alarmingly into fragile chairs, he devoured enormous quantities of your food and would read you translations of medieval poems. The only part you would understand would be the refrain 'Ah me, the darn, the darn it comes toe soon'."

Further reviews of Personae continued to appear and it was praised at length in the Daily Chronicle. The Cambridge Review thought he had great talents and might one day be a great poet. But the prime accolade, the recognition that the young Philadelphian, who had arrived in London as a complete unknown less than eleven months earlier, was now, in some sense, a public figure, came in a paragraph in Punch. This took the form of a jocular announcement. "Mr. Welkin Mark (that is, Elkin Matthews of course) begs to announce that he has secured for the English

market the palpitating works of the new Montana poet, Mr. Ezekiel Ton, who is the most remarkable thing in poetry since Robert Browning. Mr. Ton, who has left America to reside for a while in London and impress his personality on English editors, publishers and readers, is by far the newest poet going, whatever other advertisements may say. He has succeeded, where all others have failed, in evolving a blend of the imagery of the unfettered West, the vocabulary of Wardour Street and the sinister abandon of Borgiac Italy".

His mother sent a suggestion that he should write a verse epic about the Wild West, which would make him famous throughout America - a suggestion which he did not take seriously. In fact, his earnings from the publication of a few poems in the English Review, together with the dollars being sent over by his father, enabled him to order a £5 suit. Why he wanted a suit we do not know, as he usually wore green baize trousers, a brightly coloured shirt, a cloak, a broad brimmed hat, a turquoise ear-ring even, and wielded an ebony cane. It was obviously what Ezra considered to be the correct attire for a poet. During the summer of 1909, the London Polytechnic told Ezra they would like him to give a full course of lectures (perhaps he needed the suit for this) on Medieval literature and Ernest Rhys persuaded his publishers J.M. Dent to print the lectures as a book. In the midst of all this activity he moved to Kensington, to No 10, Church Walk, a quiet alleyway between Kensington High Street And Kensington Church Street. He was the tenant of a Mrs. Langley who rented him a top floor bed-sit for 8s a week, meals extra. Her husband managed a branch of a grocery chain, and they kept chickens in the back yard. So now Ezra was closer to his circle of friends and contacts, the Kensington Public Library - and he enjoyed Mrs.Langley's cooking, which he obligingly described as 'remarkable for a British female'. The only problems were the noise of the local Church bells and the lack of hot and cold water in the room. About the former he complained - without effect, obviously - to the vicar, following it up with a written complaint in Latin which was displayed in the vestry for the amusement of whoever could understand it. As for the latter, and the typical American desire for bathing, he would carry a tin bath upstairs followed by cans of hot water from the kitchen below. The loo was in the yard next to the hen coop.