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Box 11, Folder 45 - "...The Last Time I Heard Dr. Montessori Speak" (E.M.S.?)

Edwin Mortimer Standing

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Recommended Citation

Standing, Edwin Mortimer, "Box 11, Folder 45 - "...The Last Time I Heard Dr. Montessori Speak" (E.M.S.?)" (2022). *Manuscript Fragments, n.d., Edwin Mortimer Standing, n.d.*. 15.
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The last time I heard Dr. Montessori speak in public was in the same year (1960) at the International Montessori Congress - the last at which the foundress herself was present . The Congress , which was held at the Italian Institute , London , lasted days , on each of which Montessori gave a lecture . The subject of her last address was and a large audience was present . It was a memorable occasion ; for amongst the audience were men and women from all over the world who had come to pay their respects to the magnificent old lady of eighty years who was obviously struggling to give the last ounce of her failing strength in the service of the child ^{to} that mysterious and luminous figure who , as a result of her long and patient study , had come to mean more to her and her followers than it was easy to put into words .

The occasion was not without a touch of sadness because many of those present could not help thinking that very possibly this would be the last time that ^{they} ~~they~~ would ever enjoy listening to her speak . She concluded her address with a ^{striking} ~~memorable~~ simile the gist of which was as follows:

I am grateful to you , ladies and gentlemen , for the kind words you have said, and the honours you have heaped upon me ; and I appreciate them accordingly . But in a sense I feel that your admiration ^{is} ~~is~~ has been misplaced , and ^{what often happens} has not reached the right person . Have you ever noticed ~~when~~ when you try to point something out to a dog ~~it~~ ~~stands~~ ~~that~~ . Instead of looking in the direction you are pointing he looks at your outstretched finger . Something like that is happening to me . All my life I have been trying to draw people's attention to the Child ; and what happens ? All that happens is that they look at my outstretched finger and say "Look what a beautiful jewel she is wearing on ~~that~~ her ring!"