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July 2022

## Box 09, Folder 11 - "Montessori and the Atomic Bomb or The Release of Cosmic Energies" (E.M.S.)

Edwin Mortimer Standing

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Standing, Edwin Mortimer, "Box 09, Folder 11 - "Montessori and the Atomic Bomb or The Release of Cosmic Energies" (E.M.S.)" (2022). *Manuscripts, ca. 1921-ca.1966; n.d., Edwin Mortimer Standing*. 62. <https://scholarworks.seattleu.edu/standing-manuscripts/62>

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# Montessori and — the Atomic Bomb!

## The ~~Real~~<sup>or</sup> Release of Cosmic Energies

If you are feeling war-wearied and depressed, if you find yourself succumbing to the paralyzing fear that as things have been in the past so must they always remain in the future, if in short you say to yourself 'Human nature is always the same & always will be and therefore in spite of wars of liberation, treaties and international conferences Peace on Earth is no more than an alluring phantom' — then I advise you to do what I have been doing this morning. Go and ~~visit~~ visit a well-run Montessori school and spend an hour there quietly observing what is happening there. If your heart be made of 'penetrable stuff' and your mind be endowed with even a modicum of discernment I guarantee you will find there a balm for your ~~worried~~ spirit, a ~~soothing~~ salve for your soul. You will find the anxious fears that were gnawing at your heart will be quietly <sup>lifted</sup> taken away and their place taken by a great hope. You will come away — as I did — feeling that you have been refreshed by gentle breeze

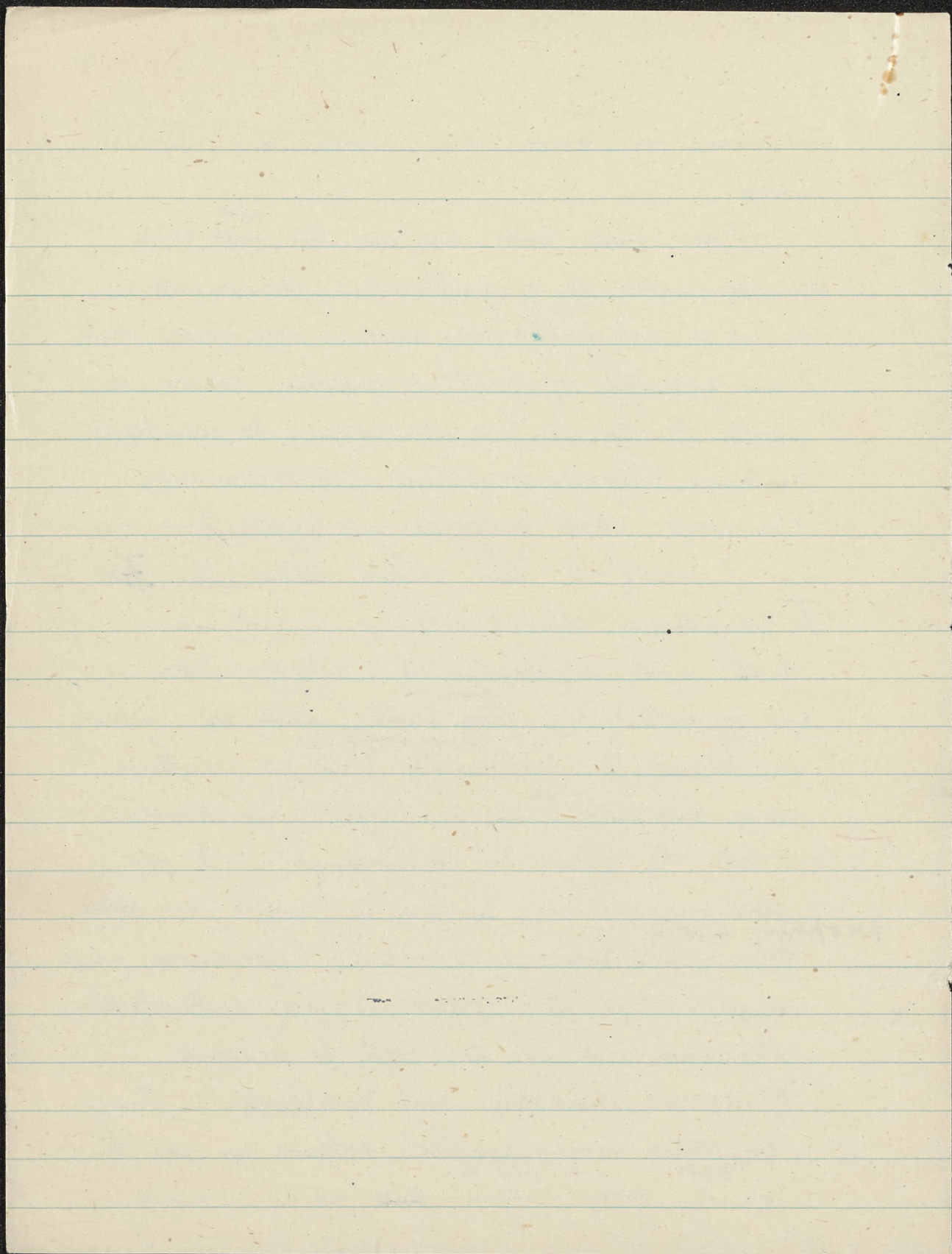
as

~~that seems to come~~ from another and happier world.

I am quite aware that all this ~~most~~ <sup>will</sup> strike the average reader as a sentimental exaggeration; but it is not meant as such. No words that I am capable of putting together could do justice to the joyous atmosphere, the unalloyed goodness, the ordered serenity, the morning-freshness, & the peaceful yet active harmony that prevails in this little world. ~~For~~

The Montessori classroom is indeed a little world in miniature. But a different and a better world ~~than~~ <sup>from</sup> ours, and one which we believe is destined <sup>eventually</sup> to have a healing effect ~~on ours~~ <sup>on</sup> our grown-up society.

Like the fellow in Shakespeare "I let loose my opinion, held it no longer" — and <sup>prophecy that a</sup> ~~truth~~ <sup>truth</sup> will surely come when humanity will realize that this great Italian lady-doctor, who was sent into the world to become the child's champion and interpreter, has initiated a movement which — as the <sup>pass</sup> years & generations ~~pass~~ roll by, will



extend its influence far beyond the limits  
 of the schoolroom until it affects the very  
 structure of society, liberating as it does so  
 immense constructive energies in the souls  
 of men, <sup>energies</sup> which will make for order, harmony  
 and world-peace.

But let us <sup>for the moment</sup> leave the future to look  
 after itself and, returning to the present,  
 re-enter this little world - this Brave New World  
 - and contemplate what is going on  
~~there before our eyes.~~ <sup>in it.</sup> The first thing that  
 strikes us ~~is~~ is that it does not  
 seem to resemble a schoolroom at all.  
 There are no desks in series rows - no desks  
 at all in fact - only small brightly coloured  
 tables with chairs to match. And these are  
 not all arranged facing the same way  
 either - i.e. towards the Teacher - but are dotted

about the room ~~like tables in a restaurant.~~ <sup>the</sup>  
 reason for this arrangement lies in the astonishing circumstance  
 that - strange as it may seem - in a M. lesson  
 class the Teacher does not teach - i.e. she  
 does not harangue the children, en masse,  
 as in an ordinary school. It would be

more ~~and~~ accurate to say that a Montessori School is a place where children teach themselves.

Yet even this description falls far short of the mark. Perhaps the best definition of a Montessori School would be this: it is first and foremost a place where the children are free to live out their own lives as God intended they should; an environment in which ~~these~~ <sup>these</sup> little personalities can develop harmoniously in a disciplined freedom in accordance with the deepest laws of their nature. ~~It is~~ To put it in a nutshell ->

(It is a place where children live and learn, and learn by living. We cannot help ~~being~~ ~~immediately~~ ~~as soon as we enter the room~~ ~~we are~~ ~~struck~~ ~~by~~ ~~the~~ ~~fact~~ -> that this is a place where life is being lived to the uttermost. The bright sunshine which streams in through the French windows lights up a scene which is preeminently one of activity. ~~Centred~~ ~~around~~ ~~joyful~~ ~~activity~~ <sup>That</sup> - is the keynote of all that is going on before us

~~here~~ <sup>here</sup> - joyful activity p. 10

We cannot help being immediately ->

But it is a disciplined + orderly activity.  
 Yet at the same time there is nothing  
 stereotyped or formal about it. For  
 this is a world where the unexpected is  
 always happening, where from moment  
 to moment events fall unpredictably  
 from the tree of time - just as ripe apples  
 fall unexpectedly now here + now there  
 in an orchard on a sunny day in Autumn.

But how can things "happen" in  
 this way unexpectedly in a schoolroom;  
 or if they do how can they do so without  
 bringing disorder + confusion? It one  
 replies: "Because this is a method of  
 education which is based on liberty"  
 the reader may be even more puzzled and  
 exclaim