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Edwin Mortimer Standing

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T H E

M O N T E S S O R I

T E A C H E R .

by

Dr. Helene Helming

Director of Studies at the
Froebel Training College
Aachen
Germany .

Studio House.

March 16th 1929.

Dear Standing,

Thanks very much for your letter of March 13th.

I do not think there is any pamphlet which gives what you want, but perhaps Mrs. Hutchinson's article in the first number of "The Call" contains references to it. The article was called "Montessori in England" or words to that effect, and signed "L.H."

Probably no one knows better what happened, however, than I do ! It was very well meaning, but not all of it very creditable ! Many of the people concerned are still smarting under a sense of injustice and puzzled by things they cannot understand ! Mr. Bertram Hawker - he of the New Ideals Conferences - first went to Rome at the bidding of Miss Lidbetter, who got there a trifle previously and studied for a few months in the first Case dei Bambini. He brought her home in triumph, and she gave the first lectures, which were invariably a riot. I remember standing back in open doorways unable to hear a word, and meeting all the elite of the educational world doing likewise ! At the same time a Mdlle appeared and gave lectures in broken English, with similar results. The first International Course in Rome was announced just then. I and thirteen English ladies enrolled for it. An English Montessori Society was founded, which incidentally arranged the above mentioned meetings. This was chiefly the work of Bertram Hawker - Miss Synge as secretary,

with a group of rich people, among them Miss Belle Rennie. Edmund Holmes, recently prominent for his "What Is and What Might Be" was also fired by the Dottoressa, gave lectures in England, and took a leading part in this Society. The English translation of Dr. Montessori's book came out at about the same time - it must have been the autumn of 1912. The Rev. Cecil Grant was also a member of this first committee. He visited Rome then, or soon after, and published a book, which probably you know.

I ought to have said that the whole English speaking world in the first instance began taking notice as a result of articles by a Miss Tozier, which appeared in America in McClure's magazine, and almost simultaneously in England in the "World's Work". Special reprints of both journals had to be made. I should think it was the biggest scoop ever for a journal of that kind.

I got to Rome in the early part of 1913, and the first International Course started, I should think, in February. It was attended by 80 or 90 Americans. None of us were prepared for what we were given. We all realised our ignornace of science, and more or less floundered in the Dottoress's terminology. It took a lot of assimilating, and no one could believe that our enthusiasm was due to anything but personal influence. During that Course there were already signs of a row with the English Montessori Society. This society had got together £500 as a gift to Dr. Montessori to further her work, and although it was stipulated that she was quite free, it was somehow expected that she would give careful attention to the training of a person chosen and sent out by the committee. This was a Miss Tasker M.A.

of Cambridge, of no teaching experience, and one who - as the Dottoressa confided to me - she did not find dreadfully intelligent! This was arranged before Dr. Montessori had thought of giving the big Training Course, in which Course, as the fee was 50 guineas, she was able to earn much more than the sum sent from England. The English committee seemed to think she should not have given this big Course ! They did not really know what they had got hold of in Dr. Montessori. As she put it to me, they wanted to make her a prisoner, someone they could patronise and help, when as a matter of fact she was a good deal more capable of helping them ! Anyhow she did not feel that she broke faith with Miss Tasker, since as she said, part of Miss Tasker's training would be to see how she, Dr. Montessori, prepared teachers. But Miss Tasker thought she ought to have individual attention from the Dottoressa two or three times a week, and Mr. Hawker came out to try and pin the Dottoressa down to this. You can imagine it ! I think she actually did give some lessons to Miss Tasker and an English friend of hers Miss Webb. But it was quite clear from the first that Miss Tasker was useless. A tall, short-sighted person, inordinately superior, and unequal to the blast of a single question which might cause her to think. She returned at the end of that summer, ostensibly trained, and with the intention of opening a small school, which promptly failed, Miss Tasker in tears. The program had been that she was to get experience and then undertake the training of English teachers. In the Dottoressa's view, Mr. Hawker had merely condemned himself by choosing her, and his insistence only led to difficulties between him and the

Dottoressa, and ultimately between her and the English Montessori Society, which got more and more unable to understand what she was at, and to feel more or less that the tame dove which they had so cleverly caged, and were so generously helping, had turned into an eagle which escaped them. Anyhow they were unable to adjust to their minds anyone so much greater than themselves as Dr. Montessori. They were people of social superiority in England, and the requisite humility was beyond them. Mr. Grant was the only one who remained faithful, and with him it was more an act of faith than of understanding. Finally the Dottoressa fell in with Mr. Bang who promised to organise a Course for her in England.

I have been going too fast. These events took some time to mature, and a second International Course had been held in Rome in 1914. I returned to Rome in the autumn of 1913, and Miss Tasker did not. I came in for a certain amount of dislike by the Montessori committee, since it seemed to them that I was rivalling her. I kept on with studies at the University of Rome, trying to fill up the gaps that the Dottoressa had shown me existed in the knowledge of all of us, and when she announced her second course in 1914, I was already there and got pressed, to my permanent nervous disablement I think, into translating for her. This resulted in my giving up most of my studies, which I felt to be essential. I had to make them up later in England instead of going with her to America as I otherwise should have done, but this is personal and apart.

As I was saying, Bang undertook to organise a course in England, which was fixed for the autumn of 1914, and would have lasted a month, at £12 per head, just to give some idea to leading

educationalists of the magnitude ^{and} ~~of~~ importance of the method. The object of course was misunderstood by the English committee, who thought it was too short for a training course, and too expensive for a propaganda course, and who generally fell foul of it. Again they did not understand the magnitude of the method or their own ignorance of the latter. Also it was to be organised by Bang, and not by them. It seemed that a committee formed to introduce the Montessori system into England could hardly survive a course given independantly of them ; so they met together, and gave themselves as Mr. Grant put it "the happy depatch", voted that their work had achieved its object, and that their existence as a committee was no longer necessary. In the summer of 1914 they had organised a so-called Montessori Conference, which met at Mr. Hawker's home at Runton. As was to be expected, they introduced into this every conceivable new method in addition to Montessori, which rapidly assumed an insignificant part in the proceedings. In fact no one knew enough about it to give it a proper show, and all the people asked talked about their own ideas, and had a dig at Montessori whenever it seemed to conflict with these. I got there rather late and was horrified when the chairman of one of the meetings began to say that she was commercialising her system by patenting the apparatus etc. They hauled me into a kind of indignation meeting held by the committee to condemn the forthcoming month's course under Bang. I was young and immature, and a bit houle verse at being involved in these higher matters, but largely as a result of my protests in public and private to the

organisers it was decided that the conference certainly ought not to call itself a Montessori Conference. Hence when it re-appeared in 1915 it took the name of Conference of New Ideals in Education, and from that time it has taken less and less interest in matters Montessori. Hawker I believe was very nettled that the Dottoressa ceased from this point to take any further notice of him. Miss Tasker faded away, and was last heard of as a disciple of Matthias Alexander, the Conscious Control man (he seems to be a last resort for the disappointed). Meanwhile a new Montessori society was formed out of the remnants of the old by Captain A. St. John, Miss Belle Rennie, Mrs. Percy Clarke, Dr. White and myself. This time it took a good deal of guidance from me. Study circles were founded, partly as a protest against the idea that everybody knew everything already, but it quickly ran on the rocks again owing to the survival in Miss Rennie of the same spirit that had wrecked the first society. Miss Rennie was all for getting teachers trained in England at any cost. Un tipo basso, one might say in Italian, but possessed of immense wealth, she had no possible means of obtaining a perception of the immensity of the method, was bolstered up by important friends like Dr. Kimmins, who thought it ridiculous for the Dottoressa to wish to keep the training of teachers in her own hands, and being socially more important than the rest of the committee regarded it decidedly from haute en bas. She was there to direct it from the angle of vision of the previous committee, to which she had belonged, and in whose circles she still mixed. Her great brain wave was to secure the services of a Miss Swannell who had attended the second course in Rome, and whose name carried a

great weight among the London teachers as a well known trainer of Froebel teachers. Miss Swannell was undoubtedly very enthusiastic, and convinced up to a point, but it would hardly do to admit that she was sufficiently trained to train teachers. When it was suggested, therefore, that she should give a ten weeks training course something had to be done. I protested on committee and resigned. The Dottoressa wired her withdrawal from the presidency of the society - for which of course I got the blame. But nothing could restrain Miss Rennie whose aim evidently was to wear armour in defence of the English child against this cramping spirit of the Dottoressa. However the course was modified to one of a series of lectures only, they charged a fee of about 10/6d, and flocks of London teachers attended. Miss Swannell spoke very well, and I expect the propaganda did much good, although whenever I have met any of the teachers instructed by Miss Swannell I have invariably found that they have given up the method, or are using it in some unrecognisable form. At about this time Mrs. Hutchinson erupted on to the society, with the support of Bang, who found in her a sufficiently determined person to stand over against the Rennie. Under her influence (I was at the war) the tail (Miss Rennie) certainly did cease to wag the dog, and things went on smoothly for some time, the Society holding public meetings, and running small study circles mostly conducted by Mrs. Hutchinson. Teachers who came under Mrs. Hutchinson's influence seem invariably to have done good work since, although of course she was a little mechanical in some of her interpretations. Mrs. Hutchinson's school, at first in Hoxton, and later Hornsey Road, was the real starting point for the method in L.C.C. schools. Mrs. Hutchinson had attended the

first training course with me. She was sent out officially by the L.C.C., chosen I think mainly as a headmistress who knew Italian, and with the hope that she would come back condemnatory of the method, and that the London schools would then be able to go forward in the old way unmolested. Instead she came back ravingly enthusiastic, so much so that the Council was persuaded that she had been captured by Dr. Montessori and her opinions were given no weight whatever. She wrote a report, which as old Dr. Garnett, the educational adviser to the L.C.C. said to me, was not a report but a rhapsody, and the L.C.C. voted that it should be left on the table, whatever that means, but I think it means something pretty bad. Mrs. Hutchinson meanwhile, a great fighter, went on undismayed. She certainly achieved success in her school. Her staff even now cannot be induced to part with many of her mistakes. She gave lectures, and went down well with L.C.C. teachers, who have to fight, and who accordingly like a fighter. She undoubtedly deserved her reputation as a great figure in the English movement, but it might have been awkward if she had taken a definite lead, since she could never get out of many habitual ways of thinking derived from the usual school régime. As I think you know, she died at the beginning of the last Course but one.

This kind of thing kept the movement jogging slowly along in England during the war years. The month's Course in 1914 was of course, abandoned, and in 1919 Dr. Montessori gave her first 4 months Course at the Mary Ward Settlement, ^{then} ~~first~~ at St. Bride's Institute, Ludgate Circus, later at the Y.M.C.A., Tottenham Court Road, and now at the London Day Training College.

In Mrs. Hutchinson's time other Montessori societies were also founded in Birmingham, Edinburgh, Glasgow and Nottingham. These I think have had a less turbulent career. I ought to add that the London Montessori Society came another cropper in 1921 or 1923, I forget which, just when everything seemed to be at its best. The quarrel was internal this time, ⁹revolved round the position of the permanent paid secretary, Mr. Harris, who wished to have the right of voting on committee in spite of his paid position. I would have given it to him, but Mrs. Hutchinson thought it was an effort to obtain complete and undying power in the Montessori movement, and opposed it. She finally resigned, and wrote a letter raising a question already decided at an annual general meeting. There was a heated discussion, and Mr. O'Connell whom the Dottoressa says Mr. Bang put in the chair so as to be able to do what he liked with him, got flustered and walked out. I took the chair on the understanding that if elected I should rule Mrs. Hutchinson's request out of order, since it had already been decided by a general meeting. I was elected and did this, whereupon Mr. Bang resigned. Thus we had the two most important people in Dr. Montessori's eyes, viz. Bang and Hutchy outside the Montessori Society, where they naturally pulled every string to get the Dottoressa on their side. She was practically compelled to support them, and perhaps she was right - anyhow I cannot say to the contrary. Bang slung all the mud he knew, and the others were accused of supporting individual work etc. One of them, Miss Webb, may have done so. Ultimately Dr. Montessori again withdrew from the presidency. A special general meeting was called under the chairmanship of Miss Swannell at which Mr.

Harris refused to produce Dr. Montessori's letter of resignation. "The rebel loyalists," as they were called, marched off in a body to another hall where they held their own meeting under Miss Swannell and formed a new committee, prepared if necessary to reconstitute or form a new society which would be loyal to Dr. Montessori. The occasion produced humorous poems in Punch and facetious comments in the evening papers. Mr. Harris and his party found their position untenable, withdrew quietly and founded the Montessori Fellowship, which pledges itself to support Dr. Montessori's work in its entirety, but which has drawn up its own rules and regulations, and is free from any direct allegiance to Dr. Montessori, and especially from the rules under which the present Montessori Society works, and which were drawn up by her giving in effect full power to what is called the Corresponding Secretary, which was then and still is, Mr. Bang. The present Montessori Society, to which after a few years Dr. Montessori restored her aegis, is now much reduced in numbers and prestige. In fact, as Mario remarked to me the other day, it is little more than a living corpse. However this between ourselves.

The whole matter of societies is a very unimportant one as you no doubt perceive. These people who want to introduce the method into this or that country, are rather like the flies hovering about a camel, who might be imagined to give themselves airs, and to say to the desert, "permit me to introduce to you this camel". They are horrified when it goes its own way regardless of them, and even lies down occasionally !

I am well aware that a lot of this will be quite useless to you from the point of view of your article. It is internal, and although amusing, does not matter very much. The movement has always flowed on independantly of all such things, and nearly all the people who have done something useful have been individual students who would have existed and worked in their schools whether there had been a society or not.

All the same I have taken this opportunity to post you up in the general internal history of the movement, because one never knows, you might have a use for it some day, and anyhow if you are going to work with us you might as well know how we got here, and especially who certain people are, and what position they hold in respect to Dr. Montessori. Especially beware of Miss Rennie, who later founded the Gipsy Hill Training College, doing precisely the same thing on a large scale with Miss de Lissa, that she had done previously with Miss Swannell, and with equally disastrous results. Dr. Jessie White is also impossible, she got thrown off the Montessori committee by Mr. Bang and Mrs. Hutchinson because her prevailing motive (unconscious no doubt) is to drive somebody crazy, and she now makes inferior Montessori apparatus of her own, which she tries to sell at the Auto Education Institute - her own foundation. Tacey tells me she makes nothing but losses, but the object is not evidently to do anything ~~else~~ but irritate.

Yours with love.

P.S. Mammolina is said to be better. "She has made more material and determined all the furniture". This is Mario's last message !

Re your Catholic pamphlet, I am not sure that Tacey altogether likes it, but he has not yet read it, and I think it is just a question of his own limitations. Anyhow I shall do my best to persuade him because from what I could see of it, it seemed quite excellent ; but I also have not read it yet ! Tacey is going to read it properly and then send it on to me.

I think as regards hurry it will not matter very much now, since in any case it got too late to use it as propaganda for the Course. Anyhow, hang on a few days and I will let you know anything more that I hear (the above is confidential of course).

*I shall see it - now
This letter took days to type!*

①

The Montessori Movement in Maryland.

The Montessori method is a living principle. This is true not only in the sense in which we say "Democracy is a living principle", or "representative ~~process~~ representative government is a living principle", or any other idea is alive because it is at present operative in the minds of men. For such a principle may cease to be a living principle - as ~~in Europe, for instance -~~ slavery is no longer a living principle ^{is or monarchy may cease to be.} The Montessori Method is a living principle because it is based on the ~~direct~~ manifestations of life itself. It is as much a living principle as the maternal instinct, or the gregarious instinct or Mendel's Law or any other biological generalization founded upon observation. It has its roots deep down in the biological nature of the child. But the Montessori Method

~~Now into whatever sphere of human life it may enter~~

is more than an instinct - though it is based on instinctive tendencies. It is a self-conscious, idea - or rather mutually consistent interrelating system of ideas.

Every new idea - if it is a vital one -
 thrusts itself into the world as a germinal principle. There
 is no such thing as a living idea that
 does not have a history. It does not
 come into the world as a stone is placed
 in the soil; but rather as a seed is placed
 in the soil. It does not remain the same. It germinates,
 expands, puts out roots & leaves, enters
 into a living relationship with its
 environment. It must enter into "the
 struggle for existence" in the world of ideas. If
 it is alone it will survive, if not it
 will perish or be modified out of all
 recognition. If the idea is strong &
 vital it will display the power to withstand
 opposition; & more, it will reveal the
 capacity to assimilate other ideas to
 itself, ~~and~~ governing them & moulding
 them to its own ^{form} use, and thus without
 altering its essential nature. It will
 go forth then, making new conquests,
 discovering fresh affinities, unsuspected
 applications.

There are indeed certain marks ~~not~~ by

which one may distinguish a true development of an idea. Amongst these one may mention the following that it retains the same type & principles; the same organization; ^{that} it has the power to assimilate; and the power to revive; & finally that it displays chronic vigor - that is a vigorous action from first to last.

It is now some twenty years since Montessori's ~~Method~~ first experiments in Rome attracted the astonished attention of educationalists all over the world. Twenty years, it is true, is not very long in the history of an idea. It sometimes needs two or three centuries to see the true drift of an idea - Thus it took England & Europe two centuries or more to see the drift of Prussianism: yet the principles of Prussianism are evident as one looks back in the early actions & policy of the first Brandenburgh Kings. Again in the only history of Christianity it

"See The Development of Doctrines.

Neuman.

Sometimes need two or three centuries before
the true nature was manifested in certain
doctrines condemned by the Church -
such was Montanism, or such was
Arianism.

Nevertheless twenty years - especially
with the modern conditions for the evolu-
change of ideas - is a long enough
period for us to judge a fairly long
time, long enough at any rate for
us to make certain observations as to
the nature & affinities of an idea. In
short we can say that the M. Movement
can already boast of a history. And
if that history has not been very
long in its range in time, it has
certainly been very ^{extensive} ~~wide~~ in its range
in space. The seed of the Montessori idea
has germinated in ^{the form of} Montessori Movements
in soils so different as Holland &
Italy; used in civilizations as
contrasting as Europe & Asia. In
Italy the movement has the patronage
of Benito Mussolini, in Vienna
of the General City Council which is
- as everyone knows - strongly Communist.

~~Last year the D. Morison~~
 It has received enthusiastic support by the
 Govt of a Protestant Holland & has been blessed
 by the last three Popes. In ~~all~~ In fact in
 all the countries of the world which are
 civilized enough to undertake the work
 of educating have a culture & the wish to
 hand it on to the next generation the Morison
 Principle is acting as a leaven.

What ^{Sir} Prof. Percy Nunn (Prof. of Education at
 the University of London) says of this country
 is applicable in varying degrees to every
 other country of Europe.

"It argues," he says "no ingratitude to
 the great name of Fraebel & his thousands
 of devoted followers to connect the new
 impulse which is everywhere at work
 in our schools more directly with the
 doctrine & labours of Maria Montessori
 than with any other single source".

Later on in this chapter - if space
 permits - we shall say a few words
 with regard to the state of the M.M.
 in various countries in the world.
 For the moment however ~~we~~ it may be
 well while to make some general

observations with regard to the development of the M. ideas as a whole.

~~But~~ It must be confessed that, though a new idea must fight to gain its place in the mind; and teaching ^{profession} ~~as a~~ class are possibly as conservative, as any of nature so, as any set of other. So the Montessori Method has had to fight its battles against the established systems like any other new thing. We shall mention shortly how the campaign opened in England, ~~with the~~ ~~coming of Mrs~~ years ago. How successful it has been can be gathered from O'Ballards recent utterance "That the Montessori Method revolutionized the infant Teaching in the London schools in a dozen years". But during those twelve years there were many battles fought & much spilling of skulls, in a metaphorical way, was necessary before the light penetrated in.

Simply because B.M.M. was new & introduced revolutionary ideas in our manner of regarding ^{as well as} dealing with him - this was quite enough to cause a certain amount of friction.

Yet somehow or other the ~~new~~ spread of B.M.M. movement has stirred up more dust & turmoil than can be accounted for by ~~the~~ mere natural reluctance of teachers & officials to be moved out of their out.

It was only to be expected then that a method so revolutionary in its way of regarding both child & teacher should not make its way without a certain amount of friction.

But it is a noteworthy fact that the spread of this Montessori Movement not only in this country but in others has been attended by conflicts so sharp, & attended by such a degree of personal feeling quite surprising if one regards it that it is quite surprising not to say unaccountable when one thinks of it mere as the introduction of a new method of teaching some new method ~~which~~ of a new method of teaching this or that school subject. Not long ago the present writer happened to be in Berlin when one of these Montessori Manifestos was in action.

It is not the place at this moment to describe the issue between the contending parties, but to remark that the passion aroused in the debates called to mind political or religious controversies rather than differences over ^{educational} method.

Some years ago in England there were similar discussions, so furious that the Montessori discussions were made a matter of humorous comment in Punch.

What then are the causes which have led to such violent "growing pains" as the movement has spread in various countries.

There are various causes. The first is the conservative action of ^{Dr. M. and her followers} the Method to preserve its orthodoxy. There are many who have criticized Dr. Montessori for this ^{attitude} refusing ^{for instance} to join up or work with other movements - as for instance the Dalton System or the ^{early} Devereux system + so on. But such persons have as a rule naturally understood the nature of the Montessori Principles - or have seized on one or two to the exclusion of the rest. She herself realizes that her principles - have to clothe themselves ^{forming a} being a vital system - will be new time to create for themselves an outer form. This growth will take time and there can be no short cuts. ~~It is not~~ ^{harmony in its parts} ~~intention~~

"To judge a method of Education

which springs from new sources, we should look upon it as a little child; that is to say as an entirely new being.

The new method should not be compared as an equal to methods already existing nor should its merits & defects be judged by the same standard. If a child were compared to a man, as an equal, the child would necessarily stand condemned. A child is not a finished product & by premature criticism we may run the risk of crushing what germs, which are often the promise of vigorous life. Compared to a man he might be blamed for being too small, for not speaking, for being too playful and too undignified. This misunderstanding might make the poor child very unhappy but it would not kill him if he is destined to live. But once we recognize his child hood, we immediately surround him with protecting care & that which he himself is unable to express is kindly interpreted by those who approach him, for they know his present weakness may be changed into future strength by their kindness.

It is at once a proof of the justice of Dr. Montrose's attitude
towards the method that it still

It is in fact a proof of the vitality
of the method that it still - after
twenty years - preserves its unity, &
is still steadily developing & conquering
fresh fields. This is true psychologically
in its ever-increasing application to wider
fresh fields of culture, a wider field of
culture, geographically in its continued
expansion in all parts of the world.

It ~~was~~ should, however, be noted in
this connection that not a few of Dr. M.
followers have erred by clinging to the
letter of her doctrine and not its spirit; and this
has done harm to the movement by
refusing to see the good in applications
of her principles which have been
successfully made by others. They
are rather like the disciples who complained
to Christ because they had seen others
- not in their group - casting out devils
in His name: they ~~had~~ would do well
to bear in mind His generous reply.

"He that is not against us is for us" (2)
New lines
Furthermore as long as Dr. Montrose
is alive she has the right, one might
say to say, of seeing to it that her name

(2) P.T.O
from Ballou
Leaven
Baldwin & Hugg
Spirit.

is not attached to anything she does not
 sanction; whether it be ~~an~~ material for
 education or an institution for propagating
 her method: and no one can blame her
 for doing this, especially when one
 hears and reads such trauteses of
 her method by persons who have
 merely dabbled in it.

This ~~struggle~~ effort then on the part of
 D.M. to preserve the orthodoxy of her method
 - with consequent schisms in various
 lands - has been another cause of the
 friction which has attended the spread of the method.

There is still another cause. We have
 pointed out already in various places that
 the Montessori method is more than a
~~new~~ fresh advance along the old methods. It
 is something ~~revolutionary~~ in itself much
 wider in its scope, something affecting the
 whole nature of the child, something which
 to many of the ~~Darwinian~~ followers
 and calling even for a new development in
 the teacher. It has unquestionably extended
 our views as to the possibilities of development
 in the child.

12
It is an advance along an entirely new
line, something so affecting the whole
nature status of the child that it amounts
to a "social revolution". Without doubt
the method has revealed unsuspected capabilities
in the child. Further Dr Montessori claims -
rather extravagantly it is true - that the
general application of her method would
reveal a higher type of adult. Those
and though most people - including
probably Dr M. herself - ~~may~~ ^{if pressed} ~~if pressed~~ -
would regard this as a hyperbolic statement
nevertheless it remains a fact that
those who are inspired by the Montessori
spirit are filled with an immense hope
for the future and a great confidence.
They are conscious that there is in the
method an extraordinarily dynamic
force; and that its extension may
lead to developments in the future as
surprising as those achieved in the past.

It is for this reason that in all the
countries of Europe many persons
have interested themselves in the Montessori
movement, who have hitherto had no
interest in education at all. ~~For they~~

Not a few of these regard Dr Montessori not only as an educationalist but almost as a prophet of a new ^{social} order. "The Montessori Method", they say, brings with it a new way of living". This is therefore another reason why it has aroused such passionate loyalty and such ~~sometimes~~ unflinching service, + such.

Another very singular thing about the Montessori Method is the way that it has appealed to persons of such very varying political, social + moral outlook. And curiously enough each has imagined that he has found in it the realization of his ideas. We recall here what ~~we said in Chapter II.~~

This was so right at the very beginning we recall the words of Dr M. quoted in Ch. II (p.) describing the effect of her first schools on visitors of all sorts.

"The strange part about it was that each person found the living incarnation of his ideas, own ideals + the solution of his own problems in our children. A politician said: "There is no discipline obtained thro' liberty; this is what

Easton

those that govern need to learn: A socialist socialist said, "Here, we see on a small scale that human society which socialism portrays prophesies in the simultaneous triumph of individual liberty & perfect social organization." An aristocratic lady said:

"This is the form of education our children need; because they can overcome awkwardness at some time as I'm sure." ~~The order is~~ ^{And as 16 years have passed by one} ~~Indian sage says~~ ^{extends this} ~~And one can go on~~ still further. The Indian sage ~~says~~ says.

last

There is a method of education for the young ones which is run on the same lines as ^{Indian} the Ashram, ~~the~~ In the Ashram the great master gives few ^{set} formal lectures; but his students live with him ~~and~~ they all work together, each at his own occupation; but ~~not~~ ^{work} under the stimulus of his liberating presence of the master. ^{again} ~~Qualitatively~~ What on the

- 16 immemorial

"~~university~~" of the East - ^{called}

Continent are called "weltlich" or "Confessionelles" people (that is persons who do not believe in God or any religion) ~~have~~ eagerly ~~took~~ have taken up the method with as much eagerness as orthodox Christians,

for the answer

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believing that the method proved if not
the falsity of religious systems, since
the children in the Montessori if not the
falsity of religions, at least their
futility - "for the children in the Montessori
school are as good shelter than those
in other schools where they are doped
with religion." [The charming incident
described on p. p. - "The Declaration
Lesson" - took place in a school where
every kind of religious teaching is
deliberately excluded]

Protestants have remarked that
the Montessori method is particularly suited
to their religious standpoint, since it
is based on respect for the individuality
of the child and further that the child is
encouraged to think things out for
himself "and".

And finally there are R. Catholics writers
who claim that the method is essentially
Catholic in its atmosphere and its
psychological treatment of the
individual [See "The Child in the Church"
Samos Chap. I "A Parallel"]

It will be obvious then with a such

than that a movement with such a heterogeneous following is not an easy one to keep together. As with the armies of the old Crusaders, so in this "crusade to liberate the land" there are elements which do not easily mix, quite apart from the personal jealousies that tend inevitably to crop up in any organization. The marvel is that in spite of all these difficulties there is still any sort of a united front movement at all.

We said at the beginning of this chapter that every new idea that comes into the world has to go forth & mix ^{thru} with others. With some it must clash as having an inherent disharmony with them; with others it will enter into alliance, ~~be strengthened~~ ^{drawn thru to} by that alliance ~~as though~~ ^{as though} by some pre-existing affinity. It may ^{be interesting to enquire at this point} ~~be interesting to enquire at this point~~ ^{historians clearly that the} ~~Now these~~ ^{of certain movements} affinities or antagonisms do not always show themselves clearly at ~~once~~ ^{first}. Sometimes it is thought that such an affinity exists but later developments disprove it. Thus for example it took some 200 years

③ It takes time for the elements latent in a new movement to reveal their true nature & affinities.

It may be interesting to enquire if we can trace any ~~such~~ signs of such an inherent affinity between Montessori Principles and any other systems of thought. We ~~have just~~ ~~to~~ ~~marked~~

that ~~by many different such groups~~
We have just pointed out how persons from many such different groups have claimed to find such an affinity.

~~Is it possible to~~ It seems hard to imagine that it can be equally "incarnation" of so many different ideals.

for the English to find out that their alliance
with Prussiasm; their worship of all
things Teutonic, was no real affinity
In fact they did not realize it until
the German siege-guns were thundering
demolishing the cities of Belgium, when
^{at last} they brushed from their eyes the filthy
cobwebs which had obscured them for
200 years" Time & money - but.

There are certain ~~things~~ points which
we can say straight away about the
Monsieur Method. First, it could only
have originated in a Christian atmosphere,
for it is based on a wondering reverence for
the soul of a small child. And this
is a purely Christian trait. Just as there
~~is some~~ the most dreadful forms of Paganism
~~and devil-worship tend to~~ devil worship
~~tend to~~ ^{to} a hatred of the child tend to show
themselves in an unspeakable ritual
sacrifice of an innocent child, so wherever

Speaking of the Carthaginians - worshippers of Moloch.
C. K. C. says p. 69.

which began

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the ~~leaven~~ of ~~Christianity~~ spreads that religion falls
spreads which began with the song
of the angels over the babe in the
Stable, then comes a ^{new illumination} respect
& reverence for the child which is
unknown elsewhere.

of child hood

The present writer was once tutor
in a family in India. The father
of the family ransacked all the libraries
once unable to ~~find me~~. "I do not
know how it is: but none of
our learned Pundits seem either able
or willing to write books for children.
Whereas in your country a great
number of your really eminent
authors do not think it beneath their
dignity to write for children." These
came to me at that moment one of those
flashes of illumination - ~~which come~~
~~at times~~ with regard to our own
civilization - which come at times to
one who is living in an alien one;
and I saw that that respect and a living
connexion between the works of R.L.S.;
Bany. C.K. A.A.M.; and the teaching of
them who rebuked his disciples for

- if unconscious -

trying to send the duoden away so
as not to bother or distract the Master-
as though ^{by her usuals} they were beneath this notice.

One might almost go further and say
that it was no accident that the Montessori
method was born in Italy. One has
to live in Italy to realize how great
is the love & respect for the tiny child. The
~~infant seems to~~ It is hard to explain
what one means. ~~set~~: perhaps one can
give an idea of it by saying that the
little one "counts" more than in other
countries. I witnessed an incident ~~in~~
~~a~~ ^{once} crowded ^{in a train car} train-car in Rome which
perhaps this will illustrate what I
mean. ~~It was in the train~~ ~~was crowded~~
~~as they always are in Rome~~. A poor woman
was sitting with a tiny infant on her
lap. The little creature could not be
more than 6 months old; but it was
intensely alive. Its little wide-awake
eyes greedily drank in everything that
was of interest to it in its environment.
It just happened that an Italian officer
was standing in the gangway of the train
just by this pair. He was a tall,

It looks
more alive
conscious
person
soul

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handsome man ^{with} in the prime of life,
dislinguished, aristocratic &
immaculately attired. His sword with
its glittering hilt hung from his
belt. Now it happened that this tiny
Oatoga thing caught sight of this
glittering hilt & its eyes shone with
delight. It stretched out its tiny hand
towards it in the way ~~of~~ infants do -
disregarding intervening space - for it was
2 or 3 feet away. This high & mighty
officer - a major at least - ~~noticed~~ the
child's ~~aching~~ movements & realized the
cause of them. ^{The ~~did~~ man then} Thus
to my astonishment
he unbuckled his belt, and reached
the flashing hilt of his sword towards the
poor wretched child, and patiently held
it there for some ten minutes for
the child to play with; until in fact
until he left the car. What was
perhaps the most astonishing feature of
the incident was that no one in that
crowded car seemed to think it an
unusual thing to do. The child
was ~~was~~ ~~obviously~~ ~~very~~ pleased
a poorly dressed, but looking woman

was obviously pleased & rather embarrassed: but for the most the incident seemed to arouse no special interest or comment. The chief ~~was~~ - any body chief - was a prime in his own right & respect was due to him.

~~When Dr Montessori differed from~~

Dr Montessori ~~differs~~, as every one knows, has a possession in a supreme degree this Xth nuance for child head, but she differs from the best of her fellow countrymen & countrywomen by possessing at the same time the detached view of the scientist, ~~she~~ ~~mind~~ the intellectual attitude of the doctor & scientific observer. But the mind of the scientist alone would never have enabled her to do as she has done, if there had not been behind it the moment attitude of the Christian.

Sense and conversely That is why those who do not share this spiritual attitude can never fully understand her method nor apply it in the right spirit. The method in several countries - as in Germany & Austria & Russia - was first of all taken up by ~~the~~ persons with ~~of the~~ with Communistic tendencies.

because they believed the 'independence'
 taught by the method would minister
~~to the war against authority.~~ It was
~~in fact to their~~ help to strengthen
 in the growing generation a dislike ^{for} of +
 independence from authority. Indeed so
~~much has been the case that~~
~~until they have looked upon the method~~
~~as a means for furthering the political~~
~~in politics and dogma in~~
 religion. Indeed, so much has this
 been the case that in Germany & Austria,
 until the last 20 or 30 years the Montessori
 method has been regarded with suspicion
 by ^{the} Conservative elements in the conservative
 orthodox circles. When the present writer
 lectured in Berlin & Vienna to Catholic
 audiences they were very surprised not
 only to learn that Dr M. was a Catholic
 but that she has written books on
 the teaching of religion. In the minds
 of the ~~the~~ general public the Montessori
 Movement had become so ^{connected} ~~linked~~ up
 in their minds with ~~the~~ atheism
 & communism that it was believed
 there must be some essential connexion.

The same thing ^{has} happened in Holland
 & the countries. But as the years have
 passed the situation has altered, & those
 of orthodox faith, have come to see that
 the independence & liberty for which Dr
 M. has been striving is pale apart
 from ~~an~~ any theories of political
 independence or Liberal Theology. &
 In her Cause at Rome in 1929 Dr Montson
 in speaking of this independence, ~~also~~
 definitely warned her hearers against
 reading into it ^{to} any such implications.
 The independence which we must keep
 the child is far more rightly regarded as
 a "biological independence". From this
 point of view we can regard the child's development
 as a series of steps towards independence. The
 act of birth is the first such; when the
 child learns to speak is another, for
 hitherto it has been dependent on others
 to discover its wants. ~~when~~ When the
 child is able to go on his own feet
 he has made another step forward on the
 path of independence. But this is a
 necessary & biological form of independence
 as a bird achieves when it is able to
 leave the nest.

Biological

Similarly she says that the "communism" which exists amongst the members of a Casa dei Bambini, is not like the communism which results from a political theory, but something which springs up quite spontaneously — like the communism of the early Church as when the early Christians had all things in common. ~~We are not surprised therefore~~

In the same way those who imagine that Mondrisian ^{Liberty} freedom clashes with the principle of dogma are equally at sea. Speaking on this point D.M. once remarked. "There is plenty of dogma in my method. When I say to the child "This is red" or "This is seven" what is that but a dogmatic statement?" ~~We~~ There is no need to repeat here what we have said elsewhere on the nature of Liberty and its relation to ~~Right~~ True thinking. It is interesting to ~~observe however that a writer in~~ the "Theosophist" a year or two ago

~~On~~ In this particular, as in others the passage of time will make more clear the true affinities of the M. Principles.

It is interesting in this connexion to note the relationship between the Theosophical Society in this country & the Montessori Movement. At first the ~~Montessori~~ Theosophical Education Department took up the Montessori movement with such zeal that there was a danger - so I am told - of the movement being somehow associated in ^{many persons} people's mind with the ~~the~~ ~~some~~ the principles of this Sect, as it was with the "Red" elements in Germany & Russia. ~~But it seems that time again is~~ It would seem however that with the development of time this passing of time the Theosophists are rather changing their minds ~~for~~ and one of the complaints agst the method in "The Theosophist" (by Prof. Ferner) is that it is "too dogmatical". A serious blemish with the Theosophist who has only one Dogma & that there shd. be no Dogma. in theory at any rate if not in practice.

In Russia, too, there were many Montessori Schools; but it was stated recently in a ~~German~~ ~~educ~~ a well-informed writer in a German Educational magazine (Die Neue Erziehungs) remarks that

The Educational authorities are condemning
the method now as being "too
intellectual" for the Russian people.