

Behavior Study Leads Mary Ellsworth Todd To Unique Position

Advisor to Leading Artists or Musical And
Theatrical World Tells Why We
Behave As We Do.

By Susan B. Nevin

A childish dream during which sleep-walking brought a fall down stairs, with resulting years of suffering in bed, led Mabel Ellsworth Todd to begin her study of what makes us behave as we behave. Years of original research work in anatomy and psychology have brought her to a unique position wherein her advice and instruction is sought by people from far and wide.

Affectionately known simply as "Todd," to her studios in New York and Boston, come many of the leading artists of our day—pianists, violinists, many famous opera singers and theatrical folk—to learn body balance, breath support, voice placement and the like. Lesser lights seek her with problems about what to do about nervous tension or a crook in the neck. And through her clinical and art work she is able to help them, one and all.

Never seeking publicity, Miss Todd has become widely known for her work, and has given countless lectures and written for medical journals. She has lectured at Simmons College, Cornell and Columbia, and the New School of Social Research. At Vassar she lectured on the "Physiological Basis of Learning," and at the progressive education conference last year in Washington, D. C., she lectured on the "Physiological Basis of the Dance." And she has written articles for such periodicals as "Boston Medical and Surgical Journal"

and the Progressive Education Magazine."

Here yesterday as the guest of Mrs. Norman McLeod, she gave an informal lecture in the afternoon at the home of Mrs. Thomas A. Robinson on "Man's Behavior and the Mechanism That Lies Behind it," a subject much simpler than it sounds.

Behavior has an evolution, according to Miss Todd, but the mechanism back of it is the same as that which existed in the jungle. The long range evolution of behavior has brought psychologists to the conclusion that from 75 per cent to 90 per cent of human behavior is unconscious. As an example of this, Miss Todd described an individual who finds himself suddenly in the middle of a busy street with cars bearing down upon him. His instant reactions are from the elaborate mechanism back of all his behavior.

Understanding of the mechanism back of our behavior is the simple key to many problems which Mabel Ellsworth Todd meets among her countless students, and through teaching them this, she aids them in their work and professions. Knowledge of voice placement and breath control are of foremost importance to a singer, or to an actor. A public speaker can learn to relax properly and appear at ease on the platform. And those who suffer from nervous tension discover what real relaxation may mean to our behavior. And all of us can learn why we behave as we do.