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Thompson, Ruth Wood

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Miss Ida M. Tarbell,
My dear Miss Tarbell:

Will you be kind as to let me know what incident in your life is the first that you can recall.

George Bernard Shaw tells me he was "too young to remember it." But Herbert Hoover has a vivid memory of stepping on a red hot iron chip in his father's blacksmith shop.

John Rockefeller, Sr. remembers "very clearly the brook that ran near the front of the house, and how careful I had to be to keep far away from it."

Another who has told me of his first mental picture is G.K. Chesterton, who remembers "a man in a golden crown entering a castle, in a toy theatre." General Pershing says he recollects "a raid during the Civil War by an irregular band of outlaws on the town in which we lived... I was about two and a half years old."

Thomas Edison said he remembered his sister's marriage, "which took place before I could walk." Mr. Edison's is the earliest such reminiscence I know of. Also it recalls an agreeable episode. Fright or pain seem to have been the prompters in most cases.

I am making ready a collection of "First Memories" for publication. If I may print yours, Miss Tarbell, I shall be greatly complimented.

Very sincerely,

Mrs.) Ruth Wood Chappell