WHY WOULD ANYONE WANT TO WRITE ABOUT BOOTH TARKINGTON? Further, why would anyone want to read a book about him?

For several years I have been trying to answer the first question. I gave the obvious reasons, and I really believed them. I said I wanted to share my knowledge of Uncle Booth with family members who did not know him, as well as with future generations, and thus achieve family continuity. That sounded nice when said aloud, and it was really true. But to myself I thought “approval,” “pride in having a book published,” and, yes, “pride in being able to write a book.” However, I continued to feel that I was secretly pursuing my own ends, even though I had no idea what they were. Some element of my real motive still eluded me. I knew, though, that there was more than either family continuity or personal pride involved, but what was it?

It was my husband who finally answered that question for me. I wrote this book, he said, because I wanted to relive my happy times with Uncle Booth. I am his great-niece and knew him for twenty-five years. I cannot think of a greater privilege. The miracle is that during that time I was conscious of how very happy I was. My life now gallops by faster and faster and I forget many things, but happiness such as I experienced with Uncle Booth has its own adhesive quality. To put it simply, happiness sticks. Those very nearly perfect days with Uncle Booth are still vivid memories. Although I realize I can never really relive them, there is a way to recapture their essence. I can — and did — write them down.

As for my second question: why would anyone want to read about Booth Tarkington? You will know why as you read these recollections. He was a greater man than writer. No one who knew Booth
Tarkington ever forgot him. I will spare you a list of superlatives. His qualities will become evident to you as you read, just as they were evident to his loving family and devoted friends. For twenty-five years Fortune smiled upon me. She does so again as I recreate and share long-gone happiness with you.