

me more quickly than they had attached themselves to me; and by the time I was five-and-twenty I had made up my mind that I had better walk through life alone.

No doubt I was chiefly to blame: strangers could not be expected to sympathise with me. I was moody, reflective, and—I suppose I must admit it—extremely slow. It did not then occur to me that it was myself and not the world who was to blame. My mind was of the passive order which abhors mental struggle.

Soon after I had shut my heart against the world the doors were rudely thrown open, and with a mad passion I loved—and was spurned.

Beyond this brief record of my early life there is nothing to be told which concerns the story I intend to relate. Nor does what I have told actually concern it, but it will account for the utter loneliness of my life at the time when my story begins.