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*“If you think . . . that anything like a romance is preparing you, reader, you were never more mistaken. Do you anticipate sentiment, and poetry, and reverie? Do you expect passion, and stimulus, and melodrama? Calm your expectations, reduce them to a lowly standard. Something real, cool and solid lies before you; something unromantic as Monday morning, when all who work wake with the consciousness that they must rise and betake themselves thereto.”*

CHARLOTTE BRONTË

Prelude to *Shirley*