

greater attention and tenderness towards her, showing also much interest for the stories she told me. In reality, however, I found everything most tedious, and would have much preferred to talk about poems. But my friend had declared once for all that she did not care for poems. Thus I tried hard to keep up our friendship, which was no more than a comedy, and should no doubt have kept it up even longer if she had not done something which put an end to my uncomfortable position.

I had gone upstairs rather early one evening and left my friend in the company of the other boarders. I was in bed when she came up at last. She looked frightfully hot and was shaking with laughter.

"What's the matter?" I asked her with affected interest.

Still laughing, she pulled out a crumpled sheet of newspaper and straightened it.

"No, I never!" she exclaimed. "You must read that."

I looked at the paper and saw that it was French.