

MISS VEE THROWS THE DARE 299

"Huh!" thinks I. "Most of 'em are dear—at any price."

It wa'n't for hours, either, that I simmers down enough for the thought to strike me that I didn't have any special license to hold a court of inquiry over whether Miss Vee was comin' back with a Count or not. After that I had time to debate with myself whether I ought just to forgive and forget, goin' through life cold and sad; or if I should hide my busted heart the best way I could and pretend I didn't care.

Was there any use in my goin' down to the pier and standin' in the background to watch her come ashore with her dear Count? I could see myself! Oh, yes, I had it all doped out along them lines! As Robert Mantell would put it over, "She has went out of muh life for-r-r-rever." Ah yes! I could have stood for anything but one of them sausage Counts.

So I stows her picture away in the bottom bureau drawer, burns the postcard, and dodges Zenobia's eye when she looks at me curious. It was all over. Yet I knew to an hour when her steamer would dock, and the mornin' of the day it was due I rolls out of the feathers at six A.M. Just as natural as could be too, I gets out the new safety razor I'd had hid away for a couple of months past, and inside of fifteen minutes I'd had my first shave. Does that