

AT ST ANTHONY'S CROSSING 19

around and see if I can find him, just to pass by so that he can have a chance to tell me what he thinks of me——'

'Oh, he's no account.'

'I don't know.'

'Well,' meditative, 'of course if you want to, but I would like to put a view of the matter before you for your consideration—as a man not without intellect.'

'Flatterer!'

'No, sir!' very stately. 'I do not flatter. I would suggest that your look was enough. To go and put yourself in his way, however subtly you did it, would be—er—well, to put yourself in his way, to overstress the incident. You did not like his manner. You telegraphed your opinion of him. But to place yourself in his way now would be worse than to evade.'

'Very well put, sir,' said one of the other men, rising.

'I agree,' said the object of their solicitations. 'You put the case with Socratic wisdom.'

'My dear fellow,' broke out the hardware manager, and said no more, turned to take down