

of I didn't *think*, d——n it, you can shoot *me!*"

Here Mike drew a very long breath, and seemed solicitous to dodge the catastrophe. But being further importuned, after refreshing himself with a horn of "red-eye" he proceeded.

"Well, as I said before, thar was I with er empty gun, an' thar was the panter in among the dogs, gwine it round an' round, fust one an' then t'other, dog er slappin' um about like dirt, an' the durndest fight you ever did see! When I see that my dander was up, I tell you; so I draw'd my ole butcher knife an' come down out'n that tree in er hurry, an' when I got down the first thing I did,—what do you think I did? Why, I blow'd my horn for the dogs, an' struck er straight shirt-tail for home, an' the dogs they foller'd. When I got thar, what do you think I see? Why, thar was that good for nuthin' suck-egg son uv er gun, John Potter, with my Sal settin' on his knee er kissin' him, an' he er tellin' her 'bout me an' the panter, an' er larfin fit to split! I didn't say er word,—'twasn't no time for jabberin'—but I tell you what I did do. I kinder grit my teeth an' pitched into him, an' I pledge you my word, I lammed him plum outen' his shirt!