

## CHAPTER FOUR.

### *Black Jack's Lair.*

**B**EAT it—this way!" whispered Nysie.

With a jerk, Austin wrenched himself free and followed Nysie, the crowd howling at his heels. He dropped his suit case and dashed out into the stump-choked street. Nysie grabbed Austin's hat from his head and stamped it into the dust, for that was what the crowd was following. Then he clapped his own blue cap over the other's eyes, giving him the appearance of a train man.

"Here he is! This way! This way!" screamed Nysie, trying to head the crowd in the opposite direction. Austin took the hint and a moment later joined vigorously in the hunt for himself, it being too dark for the rabble to distinguish individuals.

Not long after, the crowd gave up the search.

Panting and bruised, Austin stood huddled against a tool shed, demanding of Nysie and Nipper what it was all about.

"Were they really after me?" he asked.

"Sure, Mike!"

"But, why?"

"Thought you might know better'n we could tell you."

"But I don't Nysie, honestly, I don't. What do you mean?"

"Well, some of the fellows back there are saying that Black Jack, who lives up the river, is much worried, because he's heard that somebody's huntin' him to punish him for some of his evil deeds. The people all hang together up here, and they won't let Black Jack be taken if they can help it. So they're on the lookout for any stranger. A very excitable people, these Frenchmen. If I were you, I'd get off without letting them know."