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\* TWO REFUGEES \*  
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By Charles Frazer Bailey.

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Old Jared Bliss sat out in the back yard of the place he called home, the tears streaming down his wrinkled face.

"It's killing me," he sobbed desolately. "I don't care for myself, but little Martin—oh! how can those people who have wrested from me all I



"There's a Way Out of This."

had in the world treat the poor child as they do?"

Tenderly the old man passed his hand over a small tin pail that hung suspended from a triangular conjunction of three iron rods, forming a tripod. Beneath there was the ashes of a fire. Jared had rigged up the contrivance so that his little favorite might play "camping out." Mrs. Henry Porter had soon put an angry termination "to that nonsense."

Little Martin had been chided by his stepmother for wasting his time while he should have been carrying

in fuel from the woodpile. Then she had ordered him up to his room under the roof rafters. She had locked him in and there accompanied the act the threat that he would have a diet of bread and water until he learned to obey orders.

No orders, in fact, had little Martin disobeyed. It was the nagging disposition of Mrs. Porter to find fault with everything when she was out of humor. Just now she had been particularly crossed by her husband. He was usually meek and afraid of her brawling, unwomanly ways, but a chance had come up to go with some fellow lodge members on a junket to another town. This time, instead of asking her permission to go, which would have been refused, he waited til they were comfortably aboard of the train and sent a verbal message as to this action.

Always Mrs. Porter cowed down her husband, always she took a high hand in scolding and sometimes punishing little Martin. Henry Porter had at least a vestige of fatherly feeling for the little fellow, but gradually he had accepted the iron rule of his second wife as settled law and no longer dared to rebel.

Henry Porter felt mean over it all, but he had put himself and the boy as well completely in the power of the household tyro. It had come about through a small estate left by Martin's dead mother. Her husband had promised to conserve the estate for the benefit of the lad. There was a shrewd lawyer in the service of Mrs. Porter, however. By some legal hocus she managed it so that the little property came into the possession of her husband. Then there were some dubious transfers and the title now reposed securely in her name.

After that she domineered over all hands. Each day she treated Martin more and more cruelly, while her craven better half accepted the situation, not daring to say a word.

Old Jared Bliss was the father of