

## PAINT BRUSH PAWN

Some of the problems would have required the wisdom of Solomon to bring to solution. Some were singular and transient while other were an ongoing part of community concern. Among the perennial variety was the case of the local house painter who had a bigger thirst than house painting could support. That is, if he felt inclined to support his wife and children too. Usually on a Saturday night we could expect him. My mother would usher him into the parlor and then retreat to the kitchen at the back of the house.

"Brother Clem," I could hear him say, "I need a couple of dollars to buy a few groceries. I'll leave my brushes as collateral."

A short pause.

"Confound those brushes. I don't know why you bother to leave them. You'll be back for them without my money when you get good and ready to go back to work again. Besides, we got a box of groceries for your wife yesterday.

"Oh, there's a few odds and ends we didn't get."

"Oh pshaw, I'll let you have the two dollars but, confound it, they better not go for booze."

After a moment the door would close and I would hear Father saying to himself, "Confound it, that's a devilish thing."

Very early in the morning one of the little girls would come to the door and whisper softly to Father, "Papa didn't come home last night."

"Tell your mama I'll find him and bring him home."

Three blocks from our house he'd find him sleeping it off in an irrigation ditch. He'd get him on his feet, escort him home and put him to bed, the whole episode to be repeated again soon.