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## The Drawing

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chicks under broody hens every spring. Around the Fourth of July some of the cockrels were getting plump and ready for the skillet. Mother was renowned for her fried chicken, which was the favorite meat of the big crowds of friends and relatives who rarely missed a Sunday dinner in our home. I have seen my mother dress a dozen Plymouth Rock roosters on Saturday night, then fry them to take to the basket dinners that families shared at the all day Sunday Camp Meetings. She always took a bushel basket of fried chicken to those dinners.

As I grew into young manhood I took over the chore of getting up first in the morning and letting my father rest a little longer while I started the fire in the range. In winter, we got up in the icy coldness of the unheated house because both of my parents were afraid to leave fire in the stoves and go to bed, unless there was sickness in the family; then one of the grown ups stayed up to tend the sick and watch the fire.

To crawl out of a warm bed with covers heavy enough to keep warm in a bedroom that was cold enough to put a quarter inch of frost on the window panes is an experience few young or middle-aged people could imagine today when temperatures of bedrooms are controlled to within a few degrees of perfect comfort.

But we didn't know about such comforts then, and never thought of it as a hardship, and once I came out from under the feather tick covers, I lost no time getting my lantern lit and my clothes on and went down to the

kitchen where I soon had a fire going in our Home Comfort Range.

I often sat on that strong oven door to warm my chilled back as I laced my boots. And sometimes the welcome heat made me drowsy enough to fall asleep again because I had not yet had my sleep out when the alarm clock woke me at five o'clock.

The kitchen would be warm and cozy when my father came down, perhaps half an hour later, and the range would be ready for mother to begin getting our breakfast.

Our Home Comfort Range cooked the food for our family and all our relatives and company that visited us at the farm down through the years. It was still doing its faithful duty in our kitchen many years after mother, who had been so fond of it, passed on to her reward. My young wife, whom I brought to the farm in 1924, began her career of housekeeping with that range, and cooked for our family until the children were half grown.

When the rural electric service became available to the farms of our community, we bought an electric stove, and the old Home Comfort Range was moved to a small out-building where we left it and later gave it to a young couple who moved into our community.

It might be sentiment or only my imagination, but it seems that no matter what foods are cooked on modern ranges, it has never had the flavor or tasted as good as the food that we used to cook on that range. But, perhaps, I never get as hungry as I used to after a hard day's work on the farm. Or maybe I'm just getting old.

## The Drawing

Feet barely touching the weathered porch,  
I swing. Smell night.  
A bare light bulb our censer,  
Heavy bugs crash against the screen,  
Whirl toward us.  
Moths circle, blinded.  
The tree frog believes in harmony.  
On the hill, passing cars;  
We hear them a mile away—  
Listen, spellbound.

—Victoria Barker