

Photograph by Deighton Studios, Napier.

"CULWORTH"

The delightful Napier home of Mr. and Mrs. McDonald

Dave pulled my ear.

"You're the most sensible—" he began when I flashed back:

"If you say that again, I'll—I'll slap you."

Dave looked utterly astonished.

"Why, you little goose!" he said. And strange as it may seem, I did not object.

THE next morning I went down to the office—after the house was all in order. Thank goodness I did not heed Dave's invitation to let the dishes go and come along with him, for that morning was an epoch-making one in our career. I found Miss McBride waiting for me when I got there about ten-thirty. Dave, she said, had gone out to see about the new contract.

I looked shyly at Miss McBride. She is a big, stout, capable-looking young woman, and I had never dictated a thing in my life. I told her so, and she smiled.

"Oh, just begin anyhow, Mrs. Ward," she said. "I can fix it up." So I began and ran off what I said to Dave the night before. It sounded kind of weak in the morning light, but Miss McBride seemed impressed.

"Where'd you study, Mrs. Ward?" she said. "Mr. Ward said you had developed some suggestions, but these are great. I'd like to live in a house you planned."

We had just finished when the outer door opened, and in came Dave with three men.

"Why, Jo!" he exclaimed. "Gentlemen, I want to introduce you to my wife." I shook hands with a Mr. Earle, a Mr. Fried and a Mr. Grant, all members, as I knew, of the promoting company for the new houses.

"I've been telling some of your ideas," went on Dave. "And as I thought you would be here by this time, we just came over." He took the sheet of paper Miss McBride silently handed him, and exclaimed:

"Here it is! Now, gentlemen, if you please—"

I sat in some confusion while my ideas were read aloud. Then Mr. Earle, a tall, thin man, coughed.

"May I ask, Mr. Ward, if you have figured on the increased cost of all this?"

"Why," said Dave, "it won't cost any more to build a kitchen like

this than the kind ordinarily built. It's only the arrangement that is different."

"Then," said Mr. Earle, "that settles it. It has always seemed to me that houses being managed by women and mainly bought by women, a woman ought to have a finger in the planning."

"You ought to have Mrs. Ward for your partner," suggested fat, jolly Mr. Fried. Dave looked at me with a sudden light in his eyes.

"And if Mrs. Ward has more ideas in her head," said Mr. Grant, "I don't mind saying, for one, that with that new addition coming after this, and the bigger houses, we ought to offer some inducement as a kind of mortgage on them."

They all beamed on me, and I felt rather foolish, but Dave went out with them after a few kindly words on their part, and a few minutes later returned fairly whooping.

"They've given me a bonus, dear," he said. "They are simply wild over those ideas. They had a salesman in this morning, and he says they have the biggest talking-points of any plans he ever saw. And say, they are going in for some big places over on the south shore, and I am to have a look-in. And, dear, it's mainly you." He looked around sharply. Miss McBride had vanished. He drew me to him and said softly:

"You wonderful girl!" It was the first time I had been called that, and it sounded a good deal better than *sensible* to me. And then we fell to work. I stayed at the office until four, when to Dave's great surprise and mine, Mr. Earle walked in on us.

"Mrs. Ward," he said, "we are having a discussion on some of those points, and if you don't mind, could we go up and see your kitchen and see how the thing works out? And if you wouldn't mind one or two of the head salesmen, we could take my car and Grant's, and—we would be so much indebted to you."

AS I said, I thanked my stars the house was in order. So Dave and I and six men rode up and inspected my kitchen, and I explained over

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By Appointment to
H.R.H. The Prince of Wales

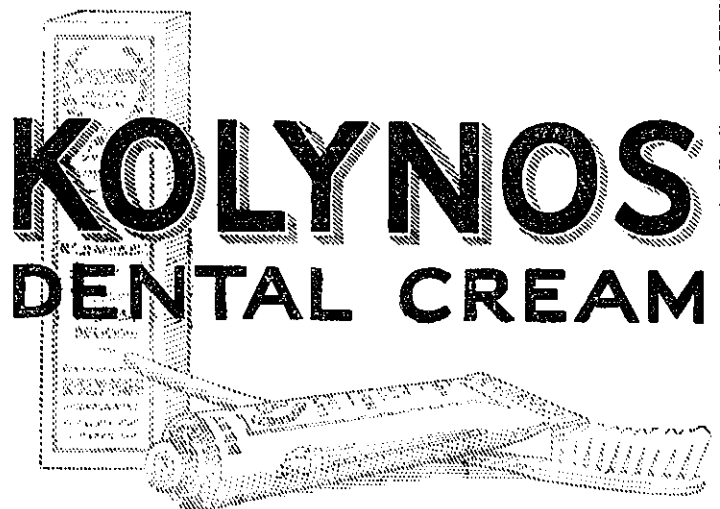
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