
 A Story of

THE CALACHUCHE

By L. V. R.

A Young Gardener once went into her flower garden. The garden bloomed with many flowers which her mother and her grandmother had planted before her.

"My, my," she said to herself, "the garden is crowded. Where shall I place this cutting which my Uncle gave me?" And she looked down at a stem cutting which she held in her hand. The cut stem was sticky with sap. It looked strange and ugly in the garden of beautiful flowers.

The Young Gardener did not know what to do. She could not plant the cutting in the center of the garden. It would spoil the looks of the whole garden. She could not plant it near the gay cannas and the lovely chrysanthemums. The cannas and the chrysanthemums might feel offended.

"I will plant it where it would not get much attention," she said, and taking a spade, she begun digging a hole in the corner of the garden. She stuck the cutting in the hole.

"There," she said, as she wiped her hands, "Grow if you must." With these



"How beautiful you are!" she cried.

words she forgot the strange cutting and fled from the garden.

The cutting felt very lonely in the strange world of the garden. The flowers blooming brightly on their stems made the ugly newcomer feel unwelcome and lonely. Bare of leaves and of a crooked figure, the cutting looked like an unnecessary blot in the picture which the rest of the garden made. So it tried to hide more closer still to the shadows of the fence, afraid to hear the unkind words which one flower whispered to another.

But "Come!" said the sunshine, extending a bright finger, and up the cutting shot. The kind dew in the evening laid it coolly to rest, and the motherly wind lulled it to precious sleep. Very painfully, the leaves burst out of the tight bark. Inch by inch, the trunk pulled itself from the earth. Taller and taller, the little plant grew, till it looked down on the other plants in the garden.

"I am big," the cutting said to itself. "I am bigger than the rest. I am taller than the slim lilies and the lovely camias. I am bigger than the low fence of the garden!"

"You are big," answered the other flowers of the garden, "but are plants measured by their height? What have you to show for that tallness? You have no brightly colored flowers to delight the eye. You don't have a sweet scent to make the atmosphere sweet as the wind passes by. You have nothing but a thin skeleton of a trunk and a few sickly leaves."

The stranger heard the flowers say these and felt ashamed for its pleasure in its height.

But the sun and the moon and even the little visiting birds said, "Come—higher, higher!" And the cutting shot a little more upwards, answering the call. It grew so tall that it could see the small children playing in the adjacent yard. It heard the bark-

ing of the dogs in the streets. From its humble corner, it waved shyly to the other plants, alone and friendless in the world of the garden.

The Young Gardener went to the garden one morning to visit her flowers. She looked happily at the rose smelling so sweet in the morning breeze. She touched one flower after another. When she came to the corner cutting, she paused.

"You are tall, aren't you," she said, surprised. "But of what use are you? You have no flowers. You give me no fruits. I think I should throw you away."

"Wait!" the cutting prayed. "Wait a little longer. Then perhaps kind Nature will give me a gift some day. That gift I shall give to you."

The Young Gardener left the cutting alone.

Day by day, the cutting grew. Then, one lovely morning in May, the tall cutting opened its eyes to notice strange growths along its slim trunk. These rough little growths like pimples upon a smooth surface, made her feel uncomfortable and fearful. But the kindly sun winked one bright eye and smiled. And the gentle dew fell brightly in the night and said softly, "Do not fear, young one, do not fear."

The rest of the flowers were surprised one morning to catch a faint fragrance which the breeze brought happily.

"What is it?" one flower cried to another, as each bloom raised up its pretty nose to sniff the fragrance. The Young Gardener, who came into the garden, was attracted by a pretty sight in the corner of the yard. The cutting, grown tall and graceful, was loaded with lovely white flowers with yellow hearts. Thin veins of red and purple ran delicately from one petal end to another. An exquisite fragrance came from the golden heart of each strange flower.

The Young Gardener clapped her hands with pleasure.



"I shall make your flowers into a heart to offer the Virgin when I go to church...."

"How beautiful you are!" she cried. "I shall ask my mother to give you a name." And so saying, she ran into the house to ask her mother for a name to give her new flower.

"That is the Calachuche," the mother said, as she leaned out of the window to look at the flowers that grew from the tall trunk.

"Calachuche! Calachuche!" the Young Gardener cried happily, pleased by the strange sound of the name. "I shall make your flowers into a heart to offer the Virgin when I go to church. You are so lovely, and your petals are so golden and thick."

That afternoon, a beautiful, large heart of white and gold flowers rested beneath the Virgin's feet. A soft-fragrance came from those flowers, shaming the scentless gumamelas and the gaudy cannas which other children had offered. The Young Gardener prayed softly that the little cutting which so humbly grew in the corner of her garden, would live forever to give sweet homage to the Virgin.