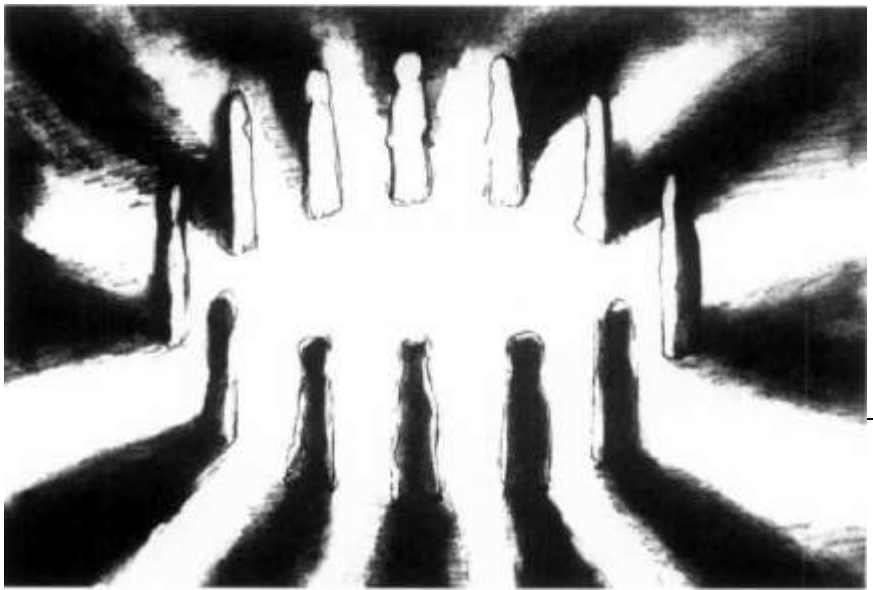
Contents

8 • The Architecture of the Twelve Healers



IMAGINE A CIRCLE OF STONES with twelve monoliths marking the twelve points on the perimeter where the numbers stand on a clock face. In the middle of the

circle there is an open space. Into this space visualize the outpouring of light from a centre that is beyond this world, in a different dimension. From the bright light of the centre shadows extend, lengthening behind the stones, out into the darkness. One side of each stone is illuminated by the light. It is thrown into relief by the shadow and half-light, the unseen form which has turned, facing away into the dark.

These twelve stand like the twelve soul lessons of *The Twelve Healers.* Each of us, said Bach, is born with the purpose of learning one of these great life lessons.' The negative aspect of each remedy state is seen in the shadow, in the darkness and isolation which we encounter when we turn away from the light. Wherever we stand on the circumference of the circle we can look outwards into the darkness and see fear or pain, indifference, grief, or doubt according to the soul lesson that we are here to learn. When we turn around and face the light we meet the positive soul force of that lesson: courage, peace, tolerance, or understanding. Bach lists these qualities in a table:

Failing	*Herb*	*Virtue*
Restraint	Chicory	Love
Fear	Mimulus	Sympathy
Restlessness	Agrimony	Peace
Indecision	Scleranthus	Steadfastness
Indifference	Clematis	Gentleness
Weakness	Centaury	Strength
Doubt	Gentian	Understanding
Over-enthusiasm	Vervain	Tolerance
	Cerato	Wisdom
Ignorance	Impatiens	Forgiveness

Impatience Terror Grief	Rock Rose Water Violet	Courage Joy

In reality these positive soul conditions are all one and the same: the experience of love and light, the unity of life. Bach *sees* these virtues as the attributes of Christ:

If we now think of the twelve attributes of Christ which we most wish to attain, and which He came to teach us, we find the twelve great lessons of life.'

In this model we can see that the action of the flower remedies is to turn us around, to turn us from the isolation of a path leading into darkness, to one which leads towards the light. They help to turn us around, for instance, from the path that leads to the pain of impatience and irritation, to the heart-easing path of gentle forgiveness.

With a group of other people it is possible to get a sense for this. Stand in a ring facing inwards and imagine the light entering the world as coming from a sun at the centre. Each face, each person, is lit by that light. Each of us stands with the four elements of the physical world to compose our physical bodies and the four elements of the invisible world to compose our soul. This soul carries knowledge of the life lesson which, individually, we need to learn. For this person it is Gentian, for that one Centaury, then Chicory or the next Vervain and so on. Then, one by one, turn around from the centre and begin to walk out into life. There are still people either side but the further you walk, the more you will walk into isolation. On this path the life lessons, the opportunities to learn and grow, present themselves. We can *see* them as they stand in our way, illuminated by the light from behind us. At a time of our choosing we turn around and begin to walk back along the path towards the light, to the centre and the ring of people standing together.

With his Masonic background Bach was drawn to the

architecture of ideas, to design and number. In his writings he referred to the 'Great Architect of the Universe', the 'Divine Plan' and the 'Grand Design'. He spoke of the temple of the soul, the stones of the temple, the edifice and the new building in prospect. Geometry and the numerical structure of growth and form are evident in nature, particularly in plants and their flowers. Bach saw nature as the ordered creation of life where Divinity is reflected. 'The harmony of the world is made manifest in Form and Number,' wrote D'Arcy Thompson, 'and the heart and soul and all the poetry of Natural Philosophy are embodied in the concept of mathematical beauty': We can see it in the geometry of crystals, in the numerical pattern of petals, the symmetry of plants and the complex design of life forms: life is developed through natural ordering and not through chaos.

Bach's interest in numbers showed itself throughout his work; in particular he elaborated the qualities of seven and twelve. He chose seven nosodes, seven soul lessons, seven principles; then twelve chapters in *Free Thyself* twelve failings and twelve virtues, *Twelve Great Remedies, The Twelve Healers* and later *The Seven Helpers.* And having found nineteen remedies by the end of 1933 he began a second sequence of remedies in 1935, of which there were also nineteen. Numerically it all resolved as 12+7=19, 1+9=10, 1+0=1; then 19+19=38, 3+8=11, and eleven, a special number in its own right, resolved I+I into 2, indicating the two parts of his work.

It is in this context that Bach chose twelve basic soul types. It linked with the twelve astrological signs (although he said that they related to the twelve moon signs° and not twelve sun signs), with twelve disciples, twelve months of the year, twelve tribes of Israel, the twelve Imams; the list goes on. It may well be that there are more of these basic soul types, perhaps hundreds. But Bach started with twelve and held to the idea that each of us might find our essential nature exemplified by one of these. With this limited number of types available he speaks of 'definite groups of mankind, each group performing its own function, that is, manifesting in the material world the particular lesson he has learnt'. In other words, each of these soul groups is responsible for the transmutation of its own life difficulty: it is the task of the Cerato people to bring wisdom

into the world, of the Vervain types to bring tolerance.

This idea, where we see the soul type representing an essential virtue which is necessary for the evolution of life on earth, is woven into the fabric of Bach's writings. Listing the twelve great virtues in *Free Thyself* he wrote 'and it is by perfecting these qualities in ourselves that each one of us is raising the whole world a step nearer to its final unthinkable glorious goal'. Each person, he said, 'is of the same importance in the Divine Plan' and can play a part in being the saviour of the world. We are all in the line with the twelve disciples sent out into the world.`)

Each of us, then, has work to do, in accordance with the nature of our soul group and the unique life purpose set for us by our individual soul:

Each individual in these groups has a definite personality of his own, a definite work to do, and a definite individual way of doing that work. These are also causes of disharmony, which unless we hold to our definite personality and our work, may react upon the body in the form of disease."

It was to help counter this disease reaction that he put the twelve flower remedies alongside the twelve soul types. The action of the remedies is to remind us of our true vocation in life: to show us, again, the purposes of the soul.

Anticipating the problem that people would have in choosing one of the twelve, Bach says:

To find the herb that will help us we must find the object of our lift, what we are striving to do, and also understand the difficulties in our path. The difficulties we call faults or failings, but let us not mind these faults and failings, because they are the very proof to us that we are attaining bigger things. Let us find for ourselves which of the battles we are particularly fighting, which adversary we are especially trying to overcome, and then take with gratitude and thankfulness that plant which has been sent to help us to victory. We should accept these beautiful herbs of the fields as a sacrament, as our Creator's Divine gift to aid us in our troubles:2 And: *Should any difficulty be found in selecting your own remedy, it will help to ask*

yourself which of the virtues you most admire in other people; or which of the failings is, in others, your pet aversion, for any fault of which we may still have left a trace and are especially attempting to eradicate, that is the one we most hate to see in other people. It is the way we are encouraged to wipe it out in ourselves.

And, if we are unclear as to what we should be doing on this pathway of life, leading us out into the world:

Let us find the one thing in lift that attracts us most and do it. Let that one thing be so part of us that it is as natural as breathing; as natural as it is for the bee to collect honey, and the tree to shed its old leaves in the autumn and bring forth new ones in the spring. If we study nature we find that every creature, bird, tree and flower has its definite part to play, its own definite and peculiar work through which it aids and enriches the entire Universe. The very worm, going about its daily job, helps to drain and purify the earth: the earth provides for the nutriment of all green things; and, in turn, vegetation sustains mankind and every living creature, returning in due course to enrich the soil. Their lift is one of beauty and usefulness, their work is so natural to them that it is their lift. And our own work, when we find it, so belongs to us, so fits us, that it is effortless, it is easy, it is a joy: we never tire of it, it is our hobby. It brings out in us our true personality, all the talents and capabilities waiting within each one of us to be maniftsted• in it we are happy and at home; and it is only when we are happy (which is obeying the commands of our soul) that we can do our best work.

A long quotation, but it neatly conveys Bach's message concerning the way to find and then to follow our life purpose, without interference.

These twelve remedies, *The Twelve Healers,* are at the base of the thirty-eight Bach flower remedies: the foundation of the building. Come back to them as the great soul lessons. Try to see them as different, individual types. Try to see how the form and nature of the flower reflects the nature of the personality. Look closely into the life to observe which is the strong theme for the individual soul, which lesson keeps repeating so that we can see it and change. Learn the twelve types by their gesture, the gesture of

the soul, the gesture of the plant and the gesture of the life.

It is quite common for people to look at the twelve and find that they can associate with more than one of the soul lessons. People sometimes do not want to be limited to the confines of one remedy and tell themselves that they are a little like that, but not so extreme. Others find their image of themselves is more complex, more refined, more evolved than one of the twelve basic types. But a person will make better sense of life, whatever stage it is at, having learned these twelve great lessons. If, as Bach suggested, we work upon one lesson at a time in this life, adding that experience to the evolving knowledge of the soul, then already we will have a familiarity with each of these soul virtues at some level in ourselves. We will have met them in previous lives. Or perhaps it is true that we work upon different soul lessons at different times and stages in this one life—a child may start as a Gentian, as a youngster become Clematis, and as an adult Water Violet. Yet this seems less likely. Bach proposed that a single soul is essentially one or the other, even if it takes up the quality of another emotional state for a time. There is always the possibility that we see aspects of ourselves in this or that one of the twelve because we are not looking directly at what is in front of us.* We are not always willing to look full in the face the lessons of the individual remedy which awaits us on the path through life.

For this reason we can often see the soul lesson if we look back to moments of *crisis* and trauma in our life story. Bach said, look at the people you dislike or admire; by that he meant the people we have strong feelings about. Equally, we can recall formative events in life and assess our reaction to them—the same strong feelings will be attached there, too. We might consider something specific and personal, or we might look at a more general event from childhood. We look back towards childhood because these twelve types are what we are born with. It is commonly experienced that other emotional states come into play as we travel on the path of our life. We may end in hopelessness and despair. But if that should be the case despair is not a type remedy: we were not born with it. Each of us is born in hope. It is with the hope of the soul's longing for life that we begin.

9 • The Four Helpers

IN NOVEMBER 1932 Dr Bach placed newspaper advertisements in, among others, the *Northern Daily Telegraph.* He offered information on 'British herbs of great value',' giving his name, address and medical qualifications. Two days later a letter was sent to him from the Registrar of the General Medical Council, not an enquiry for information but a warning about advertising for patients. Such advertising was then and is now against the ethics of medical practice. Evidently Bach had made a decision. He no longer hoped to persuade his colleagues to convert to his new remedies and was going straight to the general public. Was this out of frustration? It seems likely. It was extremely difficult to introduce new ideas to a closed profession. He had appealed to the allopaths; he had lectured the homoeopaths. Both had responded with mild indifference. They were not interested.

Bach himself had been treating patients with the Twelve Healers although we cannot be sure how successfully. He quoted a few cases in *Twelve Great Remedies* and they suggest that he was able to help people with rheumatism, paralysis, asthma and acute lymphatic leukaemia. He was in an unusual situation: people came to him as a medical doctor and he treated them with new and totally unproven herbal remedies. Today we are careful to say to somebody to whom we give flower remedies that we are not treating them medically; they may also need to consult a doctor. But Bach was a doctor. Was there a professional conflict here? Maybe that was a factor in his decision to advertise his new remedies. With his lecture *Ye Suffer from Yourselves* (pages 79-8o) he had renounced his involvement with the homoeopaths. Perhaps he was renouncing his commitment to the whole medical profession.

There was another factor, however. It is apparent that Dr Bach had modified his ideas during this time. He started with a clear proposition that it was the soul's condition which lead to illness and disease. Later he moved towards a more general perspective that mood influenced health. It was the difference between theory and practice. His theory still held good that there were twelve essential soul types* and those were the diagnostic framework to be used by the professionals. But in practice he was saying to the general

public: look at these descriptions and see which of them fits the mood of the moment. He was working on the two ideas simultaneously. So he wrote: 'If in doubt between one or two, give both; they can be put in the same bottle ...'.[3] And, 'It will often be found necessary to change the remedy as his case changes and in some cases even as many as half a dozen different herbs may be required'.` This last comment was written in *Twelve Great Remedies,* a magazine article published in February 1933. He began it by writing:

The twelve remedies which I have been working on for the last five years are proving so wonderful in their curative results and they are bringing health to so many so-called incurables, even where homoeopathic treatment has failed, that I am endeavouring to make the prescribing so simple that they can be used by all lay people)

The methodology was simplified in order to assist even those without medical training.

It was safe to give the remedies into the hands of lay people because they 'never give strong reaction, since they never do harm, however much is taken ...'. We can see the logic here. If they are truly safe there can be no harm in taking several remedies either together or in sequence (this was in contradistinction to both allopathic medicine and homoeopathy). Accurate prescribing was no longer the imperative. So Bach eased the stricture in his method of diagnosis; getting it wrong would not result in harm. He noted: '... if the wrong remedy is given, no bad effect will follow, but when the right one is given benefit will be obtained'.'

Nonetheless, as Bach himself employed the remedies therapeutically he deepened his understanding of 'how simple it now is to prescribe with accuracy'.[8] He found it easy to recognize the different soul conditions and their corresponding remedies, and easy to follow the changing mood of a patient. But in some cases, he concluded, people are not obviously one of the twelve. The soul type appears to be obscured by another emotional state, one of long standing, a chronic condition:

It will be found that certain cases do not seem to fit exactly any

one of the Twelve Healers, and many of these are such as those who have become so used to disease that it appears to be part of their nature; and it is difficult to see their true selves. . . .

Bach was speaking of a different range of emotions exhibited by people in a 'state of stagnation'

Such people have lost much of their individuality, of their personality, and need to be helped out of the rut, out of the groove, in which they have become fixed before it is possible to know which of the Twelve Healers they need."

Gorse

Remember that the Twelve Healers are still about turning us around to face the light; giving the insight to the individual which will enable that person to recognize the life lesson which must be learned. But now Bach was suggesting that we may need one of these new helpers to bring us to the point of recognition. Lift the chronic condition, he was saying, and you will see the essential type beneath:

When they have progressed so far, their individuality will have sufficiently returned so that it will be possible to know which of the Twelve Healers will be required to bring them back to perfect health.

These new remedies, the Four Helpers, are to 'get us over this stage' of being resigned to our illness or problems and 'bring us into the range of the Twelve Healers'.

Bach said of these Four Helpers that each indicates a kind of lost

hope, because the people concerned have accepted into themselves the idea that they cannot change. Each of the four remedies, Gorse, Oak, Heather and Rock Water, looks like a type but is not. Often they are erroneously referred to as type remedies, the Heather type or the Rock Water person, but this is just the point Bach was making: the Rock Water state so overlays the essential self, has become so much a part of the personality, that 'the abnormal state of mind or body is regarded both by themselves and others as part of the character'. It is not. The purpose of the Four Helpers (and later the whole group of the Seven Helpers) was to lift the chronic emotional state to reveal the real person and thereby the soul lesson he had described in *The Twelve Healers.* The Four Helpers started with Gorse, the remedy which shakes and reawakens the mentality of someone who has long been ill and has become resigned to fate. It challenges the assumption that nothing can be done, however hopeless the situation may appear. This chronic condition builds up over time like a slow suffocation or mental decay. Bach must have seen it often enough amongst patients who had stopped making the effort to improve in health. 'Of course, in all healing there must be a desire in the patient to get well', he wrote in *The Four Helpers.* This remedy was needed for those whose desire to become well had not only faltered but stopped.

Gorse

In his description for Gorse, Bach said nothing of the plant and looked only at the state of mind, adding some notes on the physical appearance of Gorge people (sallow complexion, dark rings around their eyes). Nevertheless, the plant succinctly describes the remedy, reflecting exactly the gesture. To raise the energy of the Gorse state, to prick the person back towards life, a powerful plant is needed, with a ferocious will to live; something brilliant, resilient, tough and tenacious, a flower that is sensitive and delicate yet strong and ablaze with light. Bach left no clue as to how he made his choice (except the 'message' received on the bank of the river Thames at Marlow, see page 37). But examination of the Gorse plant and its conditions for living shows a precise correspondence to the message of hopelessness and renewal.

Gorse grows on open hillsides, on wasteland, on heaths and commons. There is the occasional single plant, but it generally grows in massed clumps, often covering acres of neglected pasture. It is the collective strength of the species that is needed to lift the energy of the Gorse state; it lacks the individuality of the earlier type remedies. Look at a bank of Gorse and you will find it hard to see individuals either in the stems and branches or among the flowers. As one writer observed, it is a landscape plane' Its golden-yellow flowers, offset by the vivid green stems, blaze with colour, painting the hillside. As with Heather, another of the Helpers, there is a sense that the Gorse bushes draw down the light and burn like flames upon the land.

Bach's Gorse is *Ulex europaeus,* a woody shrub growing to about two metres in height. It flowers over a long period from November to June. It has a smaller counterpart, *Ulex gallii* (not Bach's Gorse), which flowers in the second part of the year. Together they form an annual cycle for this type of plant which flowers throughout the year. Hence the oft quoted 'when Gorse is out of flower, then kissing's out of fashion'. Mabey, in *Flora Britannica,* links this idea to the fact that Gorse grows on common land and offers those hidden places where couples may go for illicit sex. It points up an interesting link between the Gorse state of desolation and the life-affirming act of making love. 'The same idea links to Wild Rose (page 267).

Ulex europaeus grows exclusively in north-west Europe between about forty-five to sixty degrees North. It begins to flower shortly before the winter solstice at the tail end of the year when the vitality in most other plants has declined (the first flowers may appear in October). In this part of the world, as we approach the shortest day around the •wenty-second of December and the sun is

at its lowest in the sky, this is the season for death, dormancy and hibernation. Yet the light is promised to return. In pre-historic times the people of this land waited for the light of the sun to fall upon a marker stone to show that the longest night was over and the new year begun.* The flowering of Gorse marks just such a cycle of renewal and rebirth. It continues to bloom through the frosts of January, the wind and rain of March, bud after bud developing in the axils of the leaves. Building to a crescendo of golden light, it reaches a peak at Easter and the Spring Festival. Easter is a Christian feast day, but it is significantly a celebration of death and resurrection, the qualities of Gorse.

It is not until the warmer days of April that Gorse bursts into full flower. The exciting scent, a cross between coconut and vanilla, calls to bees and other insects searching for early pollen and nectar. Stand in the midst of Gorse in April and every sense is awakened and stimulated, just as the flower remedy stimulates the life force. See the brilliant colour, hear the sound of insects and smell the scent. Also, feel the sharp touch of the spikes and spines, for it is impossible to walk among Gorse without being scratched and jabbed at by these needle-pointed leaves. They quickly draw blood and this is emblematic of the arousal caused by Gorse, pointing to the lifeblood. Gorse people are resigned to their infirmity, they do not even complain.... [They] have lost the heart to try any more'. The little swords that cover the bushes jab at this resignation, forcing the person to another effort.

It is given out in some botanical textbooks that Gorse has spiny leaves to deter foraging animals and/or to help it to withstand drought—an extension of the idea that apparently lies behind the cactus. However, plant forms are not determined merely by physiological functions. The idea behind Gorse is very different, the aim and life form of the plant being more in service than in competitive survival. When the leaves first form from the bud they are soft and juicy and attractive to eat, so much so that Gorse was formerly used as a fodder crop for cows and horses. The stems were cut and bruised in a mill; penned stock ate them with relish. In the field, Gorse is often ignored by animals because these young shoots grow in early summer when there is grass a-plenty. The idea of

drought has little relevance since Gorse only grows in the moist climate of north-west Europe and not in the drier Mediterranean.

So why does Gorse have these spiny leaves? They express the gesture and the life pattern of the plant. The spiky leaves are symbolic, a picture of the life force, the subtle energy and strength.

'There is also another explanation. Gorse grows naturally in exposed conditions, where the turbulence of the wind disturbs and rocks the shrub. The spiky leaves interlock, stem-to-stem, branch-to-branch so that a woven mat provides a network of support (see Holly page 237). It is noticeable that people in a Gorse condition must be supported in just this way; they cannot be left alone.

Young stalks of Gorse are ribbed for strength and show clear lines of energy in the plant. Although barely visible to the naked eye, these stalks are covered by fine, straggling hairs as if pointing to a fragility, in contrast to the angular structure of the spiky leaves. The flowers, too, are delicate with the sepals covered with a soft down. Gorse has the flower of the pea family. The sepals and stigma are protected within the cusped form of the five petals in such a way that they are only revealed after pollination. Holding back and waiting for warm weather, the flowers show their colour but are slow to open fully. They give the impression of a shielded lamp.

Gorse has an unusual device to ensure pollination. When the pollen is ripe it falls into the 'keel' of the flower (two joined petals which form a boat shape). When an insect lands it triggers the release of the stigma and stamens which also lie sheltered in the keel. The pollen is then thrown up by the explosive force and dusts the abdomen of the visiting bee. This display of mechanical cunning leads to the flower being called 'explosive' or 'excitable'. Another explosion occurs when the seeds are ripe. As the pod dries on a warm summer day it splits open, shooting the seeds away from the parent plant. It is a reminder of Impatiens (see pages 35-6)—certainly that is a remedy type which has a strong involvement in life. This explosive character reinforces the idea of Gorse needing to get the energy moving again. Just as the spines draw blood, these explosions are like fire crackers to make the person jump, like an electric shock, a jolt to restart the heart.

Of Gorse people Bach said 'they look as though they need more sunshine in their lives to drive away the clouds'. [2°] And the strongest impression from Gorse is the radiant strength of the golden flowers: it is a sun flower. But all the brightness and lively energy is on the surface, on the outer edges of the plant. Look beneath and inside the bush; there are brown, dried stalks, dead shoots and the dry debris of fallen leaves. The bark of the main stems is flaky, rough and without visible sign of life or energy (see Clematis page 47). Gorse takes four years or more to reach maturity and then, as it grows outwards, away from

the root, it seems to die within. Like the people in a Gorse state, whose vitality has ebbed away, the plant appears to be dying: the green shoots and golden flowers a last effort for life.

It is not old age which kills Gorse, however. Rather the extremes of drought and cold. The geographical limits on *Ulex europaeus* show this. It cannot withstand a prolonged frost and will die back towards the root if the soft growth on the periphery is damaged. Gorse thus shows another aspect of its character: it can appear to be dead and done for and yet still shoot again. It is a kind of rebirth and resurrection. This was illustrated on one occasion by the harsh treatment meted out to some potted Gorse plants left unwatered through a dry summer. They could only be dead it seemed. Yet, put into the ground and watered, several of them came back to life and grew back as strong plants.

So hope springs eternal in the human breast, not in the cynical way that the poet Alexander Pope meant it, but as the true expression of faith in life. The Gorse bush shows us how that can be.

If Gorse people have given up on trying to regain their health then the Oaks are just the opposite:

Oak is for the type of people who, although they feel hopeless of any cure, still struggle and are irritated that they are ill.

The Cowthorpe Oak

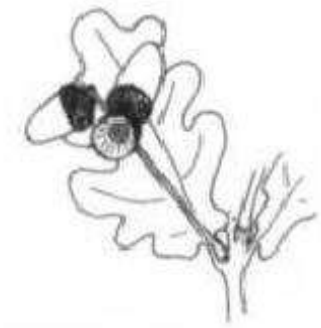
It looks as though Bach saw these two as opposed ways of dealing with the same chronic problem; Gorse views the condition as hopeless while Oak struggles on despite the difficulty. From a diagnostic viewpoint this suggests a simple either/or choice. Faced with any longstanding life problem, see how the person behaves. The problem need not be a terminal illness, it could be physical or mental, a difficulty with work or a pathological relationship. The important distinction to be noticed is the kind of response made to a chronic condition.

Oak

The Oak people appear to be positive, making an attempt to keep on keeping on. 'They hate not being able to play their part in the game of life . . .' wrote Bach. [22] Yet this condition is damaging because Oak people ignore the warning signs of a breakdown in their health and need to limit their activity. This is an acquired behaviour, not the true type remedy or soul lesson. Indeed, appearing to struggle against the odds is a way to disguise the true problem; it is a kind of suppression, an unwillingness to face reality. As such, people in the Oak state are going nowhere even if

they seem to be brave and purposeful. Theirs is a donkey determination and they need help to reappraise, reassess and reposition the life.

Oak



Oak trees are more written about than any others. Books list famous old trees and recount the folklore associated with them." Such things are interesting in a scholarly sort of way but probably meant little to Bach: it is experience of the tree itself which leads to an understanding of the remedy state. For that we must meet actual specimens and observe the way that they grow. As with the other remedies, it is the life history which describes the gesture, even if the lore and language of tradition can help to make that description. If one word describes Oak it might be endurance. The Oak types and the Oak trees endure all that life brings, struggling without complaint.

This idea of endurance begins with the longevity of Oaks—many are said to be as much as a thousand years old. This puts an ancient Oak among the oldest living beings on earth. But it is not age alone which marks endurance; it is also submission to pain and difficulty, longsuffering patience and the will to continue to the limit of your strength. In this the Oak is the exact picture of endurance. Edmund Spenser, the English poet, wrote in *The Ruines of Rome, 1591:*

... a huge oak, dry and dead, Still clad with reliques of trophies old, Lifting to heaven its aged, hoary head, Whose foot on earth hath got but feeble hold, And half disbowelled stands above the ground, With wreathed roots, and naked arms, And trunk all rotten and unsound.

He might have said that

even a tree 'all rotten and unsound' puts out new leaves and flowers and fruits, providing shelter and food for birds, insects and animals. You can see such trees in the field, broken down and dying, yet still showing leaf upon a few small branches. Even at the end of its days the Oak tree struggles to live and provide sustenance for the other lives which depend upon it.

The tree begins with the seed, the acorn. In a 300-year lifetime a single Oak may produce as many as twenty-five million acorns, though fewer than a handful will develop into mature trees. Most acorns are eaten, almost as soon as they fall. In October rooks may settle in the branches and peck at the fruits as they ripen, chattering noisily as they snap the twigs. Later, come the spring, the same birds will gather these twigs for their nests. Of the acorns which fall to the ground, jays, squirrels, and mice all eat a share, or hide them as a store for the coming winter. Birds, pigs and deer will gather at certain trees looking for acorns, year after year. Only a few are overlooked and even those carefully planted in a nursery garden will be nosed out and eaten by hungry mice. The few left behind survive, germinate and grow. But their young shoots are attractive to mice and rabbits and are likely to be eaten during the next year or two. If they can survive that decimation, will they have sufficient growing space and light to develop? Probably not. But in woodland, once in a decade or so, a tree falls and leaves a hole in the canopy, so that the young tree may see the sky.

While we tend to see Oaks today as specimen trees in the middle of a field or in the line of a hedge, they are naturally woodland trees growing in the forests which used to cover lowland Britain, where the dynamic of growth and regeneration is notably different from trees in an open field or parkland. Of necessity, trees in a forest grow in the context of their companions. That is why Beech trees grow so straight and tall in woodland (page 223) as they race to get to the light. Perhaps that is why the Oak, to the contrary, developed its peculiar habit of dropping branches, often huge limbs, to allow light into the forest undergrowth.

For the first hundred years an Oak grows quickly if conditions are favourable. The first acorns appear after ten or twelve years, while the tree is still juvenile. But even before that, the immature

Oak will begin to gather to it the various insects whose larvae eat the leaves, laying eggs on the roots, in the bark and buds. More pests attack Oaks than any other tree, though whether this is truly attack or attraction is questionable. L.J. Brimble in *Trees in Britain* noted that Oak has a peculiar attraction for insects and 'can count several hundred different species among its natural enemies'. But are they really enemies? Evidence suggests that Oaks not only attract these `predators' but carefully adapt their life cycle to provide for them. That, certainly, is in the nature of the Oak remedy state: Oak people seek the responsibilities that test their endurance. Thereby they avoid the real issue of facing their soul lesson. Dependable people, they attract to themselves those who need help and they will happily take on their burdens. 'They are discontented with themselves', said Bach, `if illness interferes with their duties or helping others'.

The Oak tree has a habit of producing a secondary growth of young leaves during summer—the lam mas growth' as it is called. Lammas Day is on the first of August and while every other tree has entered the stable period of summer the Oak uses its strength to produce new shoots and leaves. These are particularly attractive to certain caterpillars, hatching during August, which are unable to chew the older leaves from spring. These new leaves can actually be produced at any time of year if necessary. A.G. Tansley in *Oaks and Oakwoods* noted that during the 1930s in the Forest of Dean the caterpillars of Oak Roller and Winter Moths 'very badly defoliated' the Oaks—but they survived by putting out new leaf.

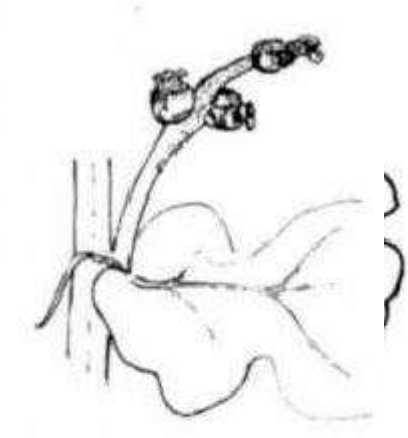
Oaks have this facility for producing new growth from buds which have been dormant beneath the bark for many years. The 'epicormic shoots' are a reserve of life opportunity for the Oak which can be called upon if the main canopy of leaves is lost. This can occur if caterpillars eat the leaves or through the loss of branches (struck by lightening or broken in storms) or even through frost. Late frosts occasionally burn the young leaves and create a strange landscape of brown trees in spring. It does not occur often, since Oaks are one of the later trees to break bud. Other trees like hawthorn or birch are more frost resistant. But Oak leaves are soft and vulnerable just so as to be attractive to the caterpillars and

larvae of moths and beetles.

Another aspect of the Oak is its facility for adaptation. Look at this first in terms of the remedy description. Bach said that these are people who have become adapted to their illness and carry on despite the handicap:

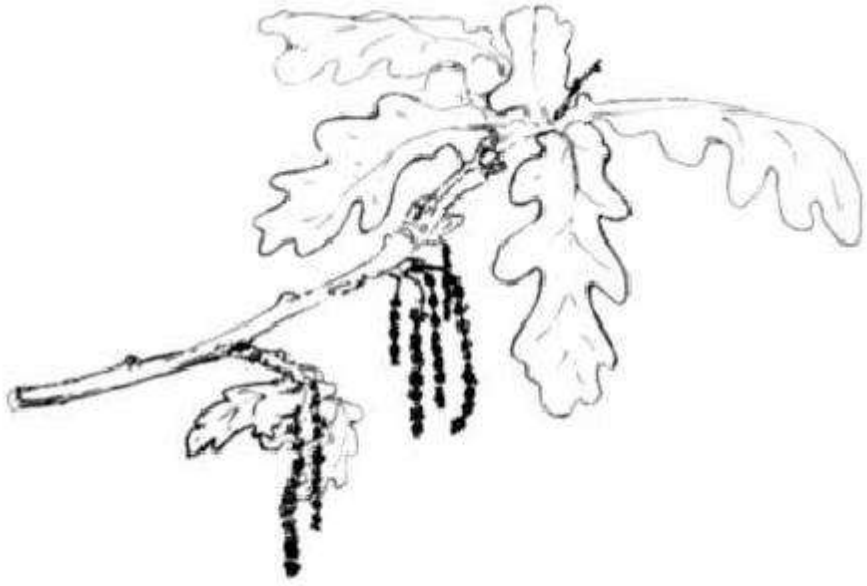
These people have physical diseases which tend to go on for years and, although they feel quite hopeless about themselves, they still go on trying and struggling.

This means that they have become subject to some invasive force, which causes physical problems, but the person will not give in to the difficulty. Yet Oak people become adapted to life with the problem, working hard, as if the problem were not there. In the tree we can *see* this illustrated in the way Oak deals with various parasites, such as gall wasps.



Female flowers

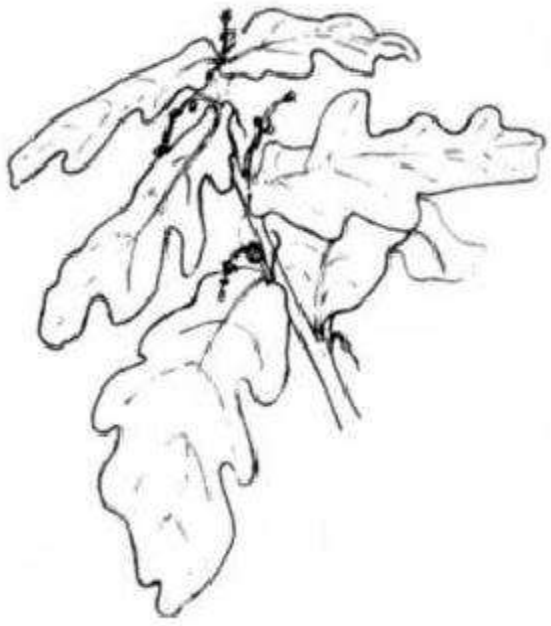
Gall wasps have individual and complex life cycles connected to specific parts of the tree. The well-known 'oak apples' are formed in response to eggs laid in the leaf bud. After hatching the females crawl down to the ground and pierce the young roots to lay eggs where a second generation of wasps (and galls) form. Some gall wasps utilize the leaves, others the male flowers producing 'currant galls' on the catkins. In each case the growth of the gall is in response to some stimulus produced by the wasp, the eggs or the larvae. It is a specific adaptation on the part of the tree, not fighting the wasp but accepting and getting along with it. Compare this with the Elm (page 192).It is fashionable to look upon the pattern of growth as an expression of the selfish gene, to see any characteristic as being evolved to further the selfish prospects of the individual species. With Oaks such an idea does not square with reality; functionalism is given the lie by this tree which adapts its behaviour to help others rather than oppose them. Certainly the jays bury the acorns, just as do the squirrels and mice. In that they do a service to the Oak. But this illustrates co-operation and not a selfish cunning. The same is true of other relationships: the blue tit builds its nest in a hole in the Oak tree and then gathers the nearby insects to feed its young. The relationship between bird, food and nest is clear enough



Male catkins

but the advantage does not accrue to the Oak, rather to life at large.

Examining the way Impatiens ensures efficient pollination in the flower (page 35), it was easy to speak of direction and will in the gesture of the plant. With Oaks we see an opposite process: an extravagant waste of pollen that is hard to understand. The Oaks rely upon wind pollination rather than any mechanical or insect-operated device. The male catkins generate prodigious volumes of pollen—several million pollen grains each—which are released into the air. Being very light, they remain airborne for days, making a kind of soup which washes around the trees, slowly settling, but also travelling considerable distances on the wind. Some of the pollen lands upon as yet immature female flowers. These flowers are very simple structures, without petals or clear form other than the small red stigmas, like tiny lips (labia). Once the pollen has landed upon the stigmas the usual process of fertilization will lead to a swelling of the ovule and the production of the acorn. The part played by the billions of pollen grains (from Oaks, other trees and plants) which land upon the soil has not been considered, although it seems likely that there is a value to the process in the wider context of life on earth.



What emerges then, is a living eco-system where the tree is part of far wider life processes. This builds to a complex picture, a set of relationships which illustrate a pattern of life force that we call the Oak tree. Elements within the pattern are illustrative of the remedy state that Bach described for the Oak as one of the Four Helpers.

The form of an Oak tree depends upon the individual history—where is the tree in the journey from acorn to final decay? Each Oak has its own tale to tell and that is, in part, the reason for the old Oaks that we find named in books: Cowthorpe Oak, Gospel Oak,

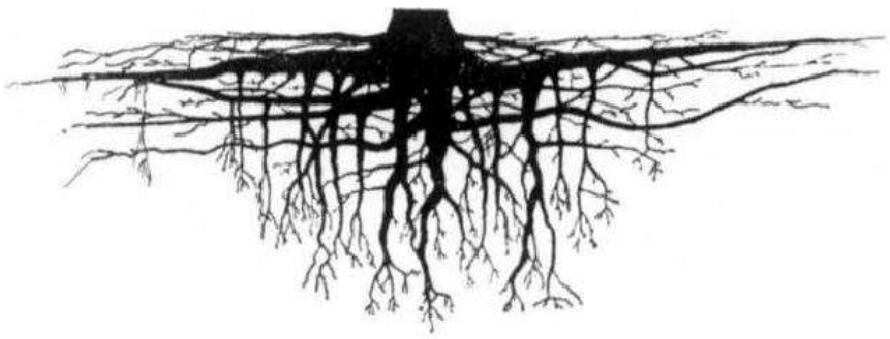
Majesty Oak, Major Oak, the list goes on. Each is famous for its age, its girth and more often than not the number of people who can stand within the tree. One such mighty tree, not the oldest nor the most decrepit, we call 'Bach's Oak'. It stands some thirty-six metres tall, with a girth of over seven metres, on the river bank near Crickhowell, just alongside the field where Bach made the Mimulus remedy in 1928 (page 51). Bach actually made the Oak remedy near Cromer at Felbrigg Camp but he cannot have failed to see this tree on his visits to Crickhowell a few years earlier. Bach's Oak has not yet lost any of its main limbs and has all the appearance of being totally strong and healthy. Yet walk around to the western side of the tree and you will see that it is completely hollow. On a number of occasions locals have put wire over the entrance to stop people climbing inside (nine adults can stand within) because youngsters have repeatedly set fire to the inside of the tree. One cannot say that the tree is unaffected yet it continues to grow as if nothing had happened. Of course, it is known that the central core of a tree is composed of dead wood; only the outer cambium layer next to the sapwood is truly living. Uniquely among the deciduous trees of Europe this Oak, *Quercus robur,* can endure 'half disbowelled'.

Oak bark

Patterning on bark shows that the living tissues of the tree are close to the surface. An image of the tree's energy can be seen from the lines and rhythms there. The Oak's bark is drawn with lines of tension; the surface cracking, splitting and furrowed as if under constant strain. Oak stands like an arm-spreading Atlas, shouldering the weight of the world, and that shows in the sweeping musculature of the

tree and its bulging bark, networked with compressed force. Another picture of the energy system is drawn by the twigs and branches which criss-cross each other, changing direction in a confused and random way (almost like Scleranthus, page no). Bach makes the point that the illnesses ... are where much balance is lost, mental and physical and sufferers will go on trying one thing after another . . .'.[3]" The twigs are brittle and snap off easily and this encourages the development of lateral shoots.* The clear purpose of the will appears confused by the multi-directional growth.

More could be said of the Oak. The hardness of the wood, (what Shakespeare called 'unwedgeable and knarled oak'); the utility of the different parts of the tree; the bark for tanning; the acorns for pannage and even human food; the fungi and lichens that live on the rotten wood; the connection to the druids and their mistletoe mysteries; the story of King Charles; the builders who used Oak for the British navy and great halls and castles; the huge network of the roots spreading out beneath the ground, like a second tree within the earth; the short trunk, long arms and horizontal limbs that make it look like a stocky weight-lifter; the brittle rigidity of the twigs and branches contrasting with the huge strength of the timber; the shape of the buds; the simple lobed form of the leaves; the acidity of the sap; it goes on and on ....



At the end of it all, look at the Oak tree and ask, what was it that Bach saw and felt in you which gave a clue to this remedy state? These are people, he said, 'who are struggling and fighting to get well ... they will fight on . . . they are brave people, fighting against great difficulties'. That is the Oak. It is the Oak tree and the Oak person: the gesture of the tree corresponds to the gesture of the emotional state. The emotional state corresponds to the tree. Those

who take the remedy do not gain in strength and determination. They gain in understanding and that allows them to look afresh at the chronic life difficulty they face. They begin to see a new way to grow.

The third of the Four Helpers which Bach found in 1933 was either Heather or Rock Water. For both he travelled back to Wales. Weeks says that he found Heather 'near to the spot' where he had found Mimulus and Impatiens. This leads us to the Gryne Fawr valley, to Table Mountain above Crickhowell and the Sugar Loaf nearby. Rock Water was made at some forgotten well in the same area. It is frustrating to be so close and yet be uncertain exactly where he went. There are many mountain springs in the area and the whole region is ablaze with the flowers of Heather in August and September. He could have set off in almost any direction and come to both a Rock Water spring and Heather.

Heather

Heather

Both Bach and Weeks name Heather before Rock Water, so Heather first. We know Bach had the idea for Heather as a remedy when he was in Marlow in the springtime of 1933 (page 37). It was in the same breath, so to speak, as the discovery of Gorse. The golden yellow of Gorse and the purple of Heather are complementary colours and they flower at complementary seasons—Gorse in early spring, Heather in early autumn. Heather begins to flower in the first week of August, (the fifth of August in the Black Mountains according to a professional beekeeper—and over a period of twenty years this has proved to be accurate, almost to the day). Bach

makes the point that 'the Heather to choose is not the red bell-heather, but the beautiful slender small rose-pink variety such as grows on the Welsh or Scottish mountains'." This is *Calluna vulgaris,* the common ling.

The first description of Heather is a longer text than that given to any other remedy; the account is rather vague. Bach must have been having a problem with it. It reads like a mishmash of Vervain and Chicory with the addition of some physiological pointers such as 'high colour', being 'well-built', excitable and energetic and prone to heart problems. Bach states and repeats the idea that these people want to influence others by petty, niggling interference, and that they want to create dependency. To see the sense of this we must remember what Heather is not. It is not a soul condition which carries with it one of the great lessons of life. Rather it is a way of treating with life as it has developed over a period of years.

This state of mind is so much part of their natures that is comes to be regarded as their character. [34]

One wonders how such a state of mind comes about. A better delineation of the Heather remedy was needed and Bach provided it in the later editions of *The Twelve Healers.* At first he retained the references to a physiological picture: 'big, robust, well-made people, jovial and hearty'. But his last description read:

Those who are always seeking the companionship of anyone who may be available, as they find it necessary to discuss their own affairs with others, no matter whom it may be. They are very unhappy if they have to be alone for any length of time.

Now it is clearer. These people have become lonely and they react by talking obsessively about themselves to anyone who will listen. From the earliest commentary upon this remedy, written by Victor Bullen in 1956, we learn that anyone may suffer from this at times." There is the urge to talk about oneself, becoming unduly self-concerned, despite awareness of being boring. It is another way to react to chronic life problems. People talk obsessively about a divorce, a bereavement, an illness, an operation. Just as with Oak

and Gorse, this happens, said Bach, because of lost hope, although sufferers may not be conscious of that as the cause. When anxiety begins to replace normal, healthy optimism then some people may find themselves in the Heather state.

This thought is implicit in Bach's account of how he found the Heather remedy for a woman he knew. She was 'self-centred and utterly worldly' and he said 'What do you think is the most beautiful sight in the world? Have you ever seen anything that makes you think it possible that there is a God?' Her reply was 'Yes, the mountains covered with heather'. She associated the wilderness landscape and the flowering Heather with the immanent Godhead. Bringing God into this may not simplify the matter! Or perhaps for some people it does. The sense of isolation which drives towards the Heather state is based upon an anxiety about meaning in life. Heather people become insecure and are secretly worried about life and death.

It is helpful to begin by accepting this idea. We might ask whether that person is capable of living alone. Without other people to chat to, with whom can the little worries and trivia of life be exchanged? If there are doubts that friends and partners really want to listen to one's concerns, what is to be done? As long as there is optimism and self-belief life can be managed. But when doubt sets in, loneliness can follow.

Eventually, Bach put Heather into the same group of remedies as Impatiens and Water Violet: the group for loneliness. Unlike Heather, the other two enjoy being alone. Heather needs to return to that same ease and acceptance of the self. The natural grouping of these three remedies can be seen in the way each plant is in retreat: Impatiens lives on the riverbank, Water Violet has actually taken to the water and Heather grows on mountain tops and wild heathlands, far from the busy streets of town. The

romantic solitude of moorlands, open landscapes of mountains, untamed and unfenced, are sometimes too wide and wild for the town dweller's comfort. Left alone in the mountains, most of us feel our smallness and insignificance.

Each of the remedies looked at so far shows the gesture of the emotional state in the gesture of the plant. But with Heather little can be said in this context. Heather grows as a strong, dominant species, carpeting the ground. In sheltered gullies it grows as high as seventy-five centimetres but it is more usually a low shrubby plant. It lacks any clear structure, which might indicate a lack of self-identity as with Cerato (page 115). The flowers cluster on stalks crowding so densely that the impression is of a massed colour rather than individual plants. Heather forms a specialized habitat, where each plant shelters its neighbour, so there is a closeness there. It builds into a miniature forest, excluding other species. This indicates the tendency of Heather people to sap the vitality of others, with their need for closeness and constant chatter. But it is a weak association. The flowers, once open, stay on the stalk for many months, slowly fading and drying out. They can even be found there the following spring as the new growth and flower buds form. Heather people are sometimes hard to get away from

(Bach called them button-holers') and this attachment is like that of the flowers. But most of what can be usefully observed is related to the general environment, the landscape where Heather grows.

It is the landscape, the exposed, windswept moorland which really informs this remedy. Heather is as much an environmental essence, based upon the total geography of the place, as it is based upon the flower of the plant. If this is so, what does the land tell us of the remedy state? Heather grows in unfrequented places, where the soil is poor and there is no agricultural value to the land. A good field in the lowlands, by contrast, has been looked upon with particular intention by the owner for generations. The farmer imposes the thought form for the land use: grazing for cattle, grass for hay, a space for wheat or barley. No such intention is found on the moors where Heather grows; relatively it is a free space. As a result, the feeling of the land is different, less possessed, less directed. It is this sense of freedom which may be alien and generate loneliness; or else it can be comforting and create a sense for the unity of life. Either way, positive or negative, it plays into the experience of the Heather state.

A description of mountain scenery may add little to the image of where Heather grows. More relevant is a description of the experience of making a remedy there:

When we make a flower remedy, especially if it is a long way from home, there is not much else to do but sit and just be there. You sit and look at the sky, you look at the flowers, you sit and think and then you just sit. This morning it was so beautiful. The sky was intensely blue, the Heather vibrant pink -purple. The day was so warm and fine. Nobody else was there, no other people at any rate.

There were a few wild ponies and the odd sheep, a couple of ravens 'cawing' at each other. Slowly, as I quietened myself the quietness became immense—the silence stretched away over the great empty valleys below; the space filled with the warm, vibrant, living air. The quiet joy of being there was so strong. Although it is hard to put into words, I felt that this is the remedy for unification. I felt a presence that is behind all individual things . . . like the spirit that is behind each species. There is the spirit that is behind the

Heather or every other individual plant, animal or insect. Each plant knows how to be itself because it is connected to this spirit. The bees that were thronging the Heather flowers knew how to be themselves because of the spirit of `bee-ness' that they are a part of They fly up from the valley below, drawn by the scent of the Heather, gather the pollen and nectar from the millions of flowers and unfailingly navigate their way home. They know their purpose within this spirit and live it. But there are many, many other lives just as complex and purposeful. The spiders laying webs, the minute insects that crawl, buzz and hover, the gnats that hang like a mist suspended over a particular rock as if pointing a meaning to it. Then there are birds that curve and call in the air, the skylark thrilling high and clear. They come like the spirit offreedom that lives there wild and remote.

Many of us, I suppose, know this experience, the joy that we can have in such a place. But at the same time I saw that while the plants, the insects and the birds were each connected to their own spirit and knew their nature—I saw that human beings so often were not. It seemed that some people failed to contact this spirit in themselves and that was why they felt lost and confused. That was the message of the Heather. The negative state of the Heather remedy was this feeling of isolation, of loneliness, of being unable to endure the wild and open space of the soul, alone. Then I saw that there really is a 'universal mind substance' that each of us can reach into and be a part of. That is the spirit that lies behind or rather within human beings. To reach to this spirit one had only to move towards it, rather than turning away. It carried all within it. It knew all, saw all, and was all. To be a part of that unity was to be no longer alone. It was the comfort and blessedness of communion, being one with all life, separate but part of a united creation. It is a little like coming home, like meeting your family, like knowing that you are not alone because you are loved Sitting up there with the Heather that morning I felt that I was no longer a stranger in the land, no longer apart and isolated but one with it all. I didn't want to leave. I sat there for three hours while the remedy was making and they were like minutes, warm, rich and beautiful.

If the negative keywords for Heather are self-centered, self-concern and self-obsessed then the positive keywords must point to

a release, a sense of unity, of being part of the whole without boundary or limit. Most commentaries on Bach remedies have taken a negative view of Heather and focused on the unpleasant symptoms of the lonely person. But everything about the remedy points to a wider picture, a deeper meaning and a more valuable application than even Bach wrote about in his *Twelve Healers* description.

Rock Water

Rock Water is not a flower remedy in the strict sense of the phrase: it is not made from flowers. Rock Water, said Bach, should be taken from any well or spring 'which has been known to be a healing centre and which is still left free in its natural state, unhampered by the shrines of man'. [41] Later he modifies 'healing centre' to having had 'healing power'. Water from the spring is taken in a thin glass bowl and set down nearby so that it may receive clear, uninterrupted sunshine. That's it, that's all. 'The water is cold and condensation immediately forms on the outside glass After some time the condensation clears as the water in the bowl warms. Later the familiar bubbles appear and the winking, spectral colours grow stronger until the essence is made. Bach said this remedy only needed about half an hour" although Nora Weeks speaks of three hours: she erred on the side of caution.44

Rock Water is for idealists who 'have very strong opinions about religion, or politics, or reform'.

They are ruled by theories, are disapproving, critical and strict and so lose much of the joy of life' .[46] They want to lead by example but end up giving themselves and everybody else a hard time. Was this Bach's perception of himself at this time? Certainly much of his writing has a kind of passionate idealism and we might suppose that he found the Rock Water remedy by the same process of sympathetic resonance that led to Impatiens (pages 36-7);

significantly, he mentions the severity of 'the inquisitor '[47] in relation to both.

Since there are no plants or trees involved, one cannot speak of the gesture of the flower reflecting the gesture of the person. Yet the basic presentation of a person in the Rock Water state shows the rigidity and obduracy of stone that contrasts with the softening, fluid movement of water. So the complementary gestures are illustrated immediately by the two elements involved. But the quality of this essence goes much further. To see it we must take in a wider perspective including a range of ideas, beliefs and history which surround the healing power of a sacred spring; consider the whole environment, both physical and metaphysical. It is for this reason that Rock Water is sometimes spoken of as the first 'environmental essence', although Heather shares in this as well .4[8]

The only clue Bach gave to the environmental aspect of the Rock Water spring is his comment that it should have traditional healing qualities and that it needs to be 'unhampered' by any shrines of man's making: the shrine of nature is enough. Two thoughts come from this. Why should some springs or wells have been associated with healing and why might their quality be changed when they become built-up as a shrine or place of worship? There is a line of development in this, working backwards from the famous shrines, which become places of pilgrimage, to the simplest healing spring. Think of Lourdes, where the Virgin Mary is believed to have appeared to a girl in visions in 1858. Think of Saint Winifred's Well at Holywell in North Wales, or go back further to the Bethesda pool in Jerusalem. According to St John's Gospel, Bethesda pool was occasionally 'troubled by an angel' and of the waiting sick those who got first into the pool might be healed. Such springs may have a reputation built upon reality but they become places where people congregate, waiting and hoping for a miracle. All their thoughts create an atmosphere. Then the thoughts take on a concrete form in a shrine (Bethesda pool had five porticoes, *John* 5, a) and also become structured into religion. The architecture of belief is built with priests, services, rituals and blessings. All of it is worthy enough, perhaps, but it creates a strong pattern of energy around the spring and water that flows from it; both become

informed by the surrounding physical and metaphysical environment. Water, as we have seen (pages 61-7) is a medium that readily absorbs the thought forms and patterning to which it is exposed. At the very least we can say that the water at Lourdes is charged and changed by the devotion and belief of the priests and pilgrims.

Belief in the sanctity of certain springs predated Christianity. The reported miracle at Bethesda pool linked Jesus to an older tradition and power. In pre-Christian cultures, we are told, there was a sense that the earth itself was holy and the land inhabited by divine presences. Wells and springs featured in ceremonies and religious observance. Nature worship is not well documented but the presence of weapons, jewellery and other archeological finds in springs may suggest votive offerings to the mother goddess (Gaia) or some other spirit which inhabited a particular locality. Caves and springs have been seen as an entrance to the underworld and so a portal to the mysteries of life and death. Alternatively caves were thought of as the womb of the mother goddess and springs as the issue from her body. Francis Jones in the opening sentence of *The Holy Wells of Wales* makes the point:

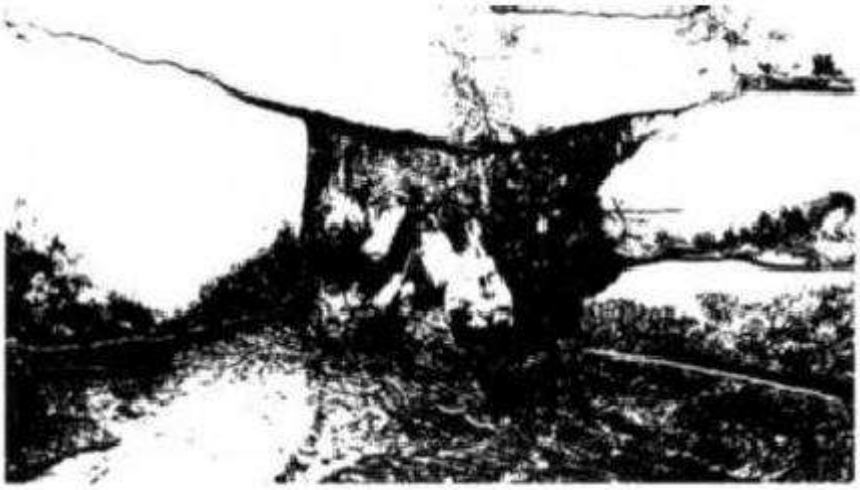
It cannot be stressed too often that everything relating to wells, whether in early form or in mangled survival, traces to one source—religion. There are in Wales wells which must have been sacred even in pre-Christian times, wells transformed from pagan to Christian usages, and wells that claim a purely Christian origin.

The evidence for a cult of well worship, however, is sketchy, being based upon myths, legends, folk-tales, and obscure, half-remembered rituals. Little is known for certain about the pre-Christian well-worship in Britain. We can be more confident in the light of known history: the early Christians made definite efforts to adopt traditional pagan shrines, such as wells, for the new religion. They did so in obedience to the instructions of Pope Gregory I, who sent Augustine on a mission to convert England (597 AD), with a group of forty monks. Gregory told them to purify the pagan temples and to take them over for Christian worship. Subsequent directives tried to prevent 'heathen' worship at trees, wells, rivers and stones. We can only guess how this was done. The process of

converting pagans to Christianity called for people with absolute conviction, demonstrable virtue and courage, with the determination to convince others of their cause by living an exemplary life. The characteristics, most precisely, that Bach ascribed to the Rock Water person.

Rock Water, therefore, is linked to the tradition of sacred places in nature through pagan beliefs and to the missionaries and saints who converted Britain to Christianity. No doubt there was something of a struggle here between the asceticism of the monks and the more liberated fertility rites of the heathen. The early Christians wanted to demonstrate the correct way to live, to lead people to the new faith by example. But missionary zeal is an acquired state of mind, one that is not essential to the being. That is why Rock Water is one of the Seven Helpers. Bach wrote that Rock Water people 'hope to be examples which will appeal to others who may follow their ideas and be better as a result'. But also, like the missionary, a Rock Water person wants so much to convert, 'any failure to make others follow their ideas brings them much unhappiness'." In this Bach is perhaps siding against the saints and with the sinners. He said Rock Water people are excessively 'strict in their way of living'. But the problem is one of balance. If the saint is too mental, ruled by theory and not by love, then there will be a problem. Asceticism can deaden the heart.

Christianity and the saints who gave their names to many of the healing springs modified the nature of the place, modifying the quality of the water by altering the pattern of thought in that area. Their ideas travelled across the land, carried by the water of streams and rivers—their thoughts and prayers sent out along the waterways. This was a part of the deliberately planned conversion of pagan Britain. The native belief in the divinity of wells and rivers was adapted and displaced while the medium was used to broadcast to the land. That is why so many churches were built upon springs and aligned with ancient sacred sites, the ley lines which Alfred Watkins observed in *The Old Straight Track*. [55] Such findings were confirmed by the water diviner Guy Underwood in his book, *The Pattern of the Past.*



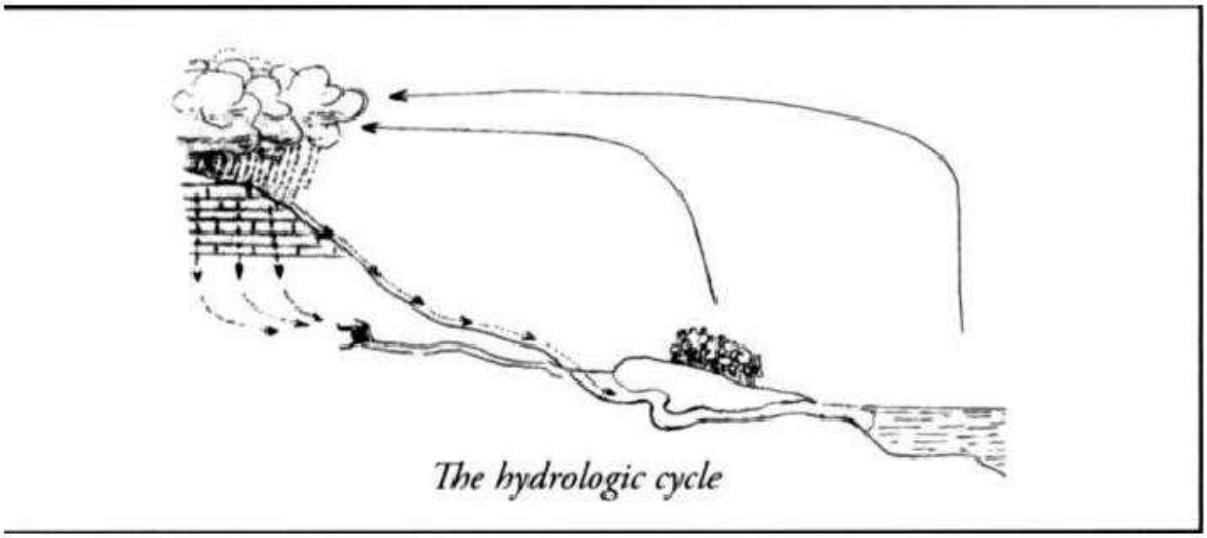
A Rock Water spring

Today it is hard to define what makes for a healing quality in any particular well. It is certainly more than the mineral traces dissolved in the water. 'There are some fifty named healing springs in Herefordshire alone. Frances Jones lists 37o healing wells in Wales, although he notes that almost all saints' wells and those associated with churches and megaliths are also credited with healing powers. Most are good for eyes but others have a reputation for curing rheumatism, skin diseases, lameness and injuries. But it seems likely that 'every ancient spring was worshipped by our pagan forefathers, and there are traces of this in the medicinal virtues attributed to so many even at the present day'. In other words, any account of a tradition of healing at a particular sacred spring is the residual memory of a far more extensive healing quality which was widely accepted in the past.*

It was the narrowing focus of Christianity which began to limit healing in holy wells to the physical body. In the old way, the spiritual health of a community was integrated with its physical health. Both were expressed in the health of the land, generally, and in the sacred trees and springs in particular. As the water flowed out into the valley it revitalized all life forms which lived there. The coming of Christianity, broadly speaking, changed this. Spiritual health was separated into the church and physical health became a measure of human suffering. Only water that was blessed in and by the church was holy water. It did not happen in a decade nor in a century, but slowly the sacred became profane. We have the residue of such things in the wishing well where people throw coins to raise funds for the local hospital.

Whatever the original healing power of the wells, St Thomas, St Kevin and their brother monks conspicuously borrowed some of that power to further their healing ministry. But if every spring was sacred two or three thousand years ago we are dealing with a change in perception rather than any change in power or quality. Or rather, the two go together: the healing quality depends upon the way that we look upon the spring. The world is what we think it to be. As such, Bach was resonating the pattern of life force which surrounds a traditional healing well, with its history, myth and legend and all the thoughts and ideas that are and were associated with it. Part of this pattern has to include the very nature of water itself.

Water is essential for life in this **world,** being formed at the beginning. In a showcase on an upper gallery of the British Museum a collection of cylinder seals tell the story of the Babylonian version of *Genesis.* Apsu and Tiamat were the first beings. Apsu is called the Sweet Waters, Tiamat the Salt Waters. From their union existence began. In the beginning, says another genesis story, there was formless void, darkness and the deep. These are the conditions that Apsu and Tiamat embody, primeval chaos and the watery deep beneath the earth.



The hydrologic cycle

The movement between salt water and sweet water is still

essential to the processes of life on Earth, as is the migration of water drawn from the ocean back up on to the land. The hydrologic cycle, a prosaic name for a most poetic process, is the cyclic movement of water around and through the biosphere. At every stage the salt and sweet are mingling, in blood, root, river and rain. Without pure water we cannot live, yet salt is the very stuff of life. It is the dynamic of such polarities which define genesis: light and dark, day and night, the visible and the invisible.

A Rock Water spring like St Thomas' well is a good place to wonder at such mysteries. From the hills of the border county of Herefordshire, sweet water begins its journey down to the sea. Water that flows out from such a source has come from the darkness and the deep. It is at the beginning, it is Apsu's. At every moment there is an individual birth for the water which leaps from the dark womb of the earth; out from the darkness into the day. The headlong fall of Apsu down from the hills to the plains and the coast is continuous, a constant flow of becoming.

The rivers of the world, small or great, flow out into the sea. The water from St Thomas' well flows into the River Monnow and out past Monmouth and Chepstow into the Severn Estuary. From here it is swept up into St George's Channel or out into the North Atlantic current towards the west of Ireland. Mixed now with the salt of Tiamat the water that was blessed with St Thomas' name has an unknown life in the oceans.

There is no rest in the sea. Always there is the rising tide, the swell and storm of waves, the drift of currents and the turbulence of life. Life, it is said, came from the sea. Agitation on the sea's surface allows some of the water to evaporate or be picked up by wind. Losing most of its salt, it enters the air and is carried for **a** few days in cloud before falling as rain, either on land or back into the sea. Some such clouds, blown by the prevailing South Westerlies form up over the northern Atlantic and settle over South Wales and the Brecon Beacons. The water falls to earth as rain on the open hilltops of the Black Mountains. **Much** of the rain runs off the surface of the land or seeps into the soil to be drawn up in the respiratory cycle of plants and trees. But some of it falls into the deep beds of ground water where it disappears from the life cycles

on the surface of the planet. It returns to Apsu.

The water that is being born from a spring has come from a place which is out of existence, a place of death. This cycle of birth, life and death may not be attractive to the literal mind, but consider the deep places within the earth that are without light and life. The visible world is continuous existence, even into deep space; only the internal and the invisible part of the planet is really out of existence. When water has fallen upon the land and it disappears from sight it has begun a journey of transformation in the underworld.

Water may remain in a deep aquifer for hundreds of years: lying in the bedrock, creeping in the interstitial spaces, settling in caverns of silence. Here there is static discharge. Ions are released in slow precipitates of chemistry; salts settling out in the darkness, like memories. In the holding quiet of the earth water waits, filtering out traces of the illumined world until it is polished to transparency.

St Thomas' Well is not on the maps. There are no signposts or tracks. Hidden away, it is placed between worlds, an Avalon of wonder. The water is icy cool, even in the hottest weather; the pool, shaded by trees and fenced from the farm animals, is a silent memory of the lake caverns far below. Sunlight falls, broken by the leaves to sparkle on the emerging water. Out of the rock crevice a steady and unfailing stream springs from the depth of the earth, from beyond our seeing and sensing. It is a place of renewal. Older than its Christian name, this well is a focus for releasing the potent forces of new life into the world.

So when we dip a glass bowl into the pool of this well or any other Rock Water spring we are in contact with the forces of the newborn. And just as a baby carries something of another reality, so this water has a memory of the underworld. If the land is healthy and the water pure, then the healing strength is there, naturally. By putting the bowl of water out in the sunlight we imprint upon it the clear light of life and the quality of the time and place, the environment around. The remedy then carries the imprint of a new beginning. This is the positive quality of Rock Water: to see all

things anew and not through the prejudice of theory. It brings, said Bach, `the understanding of allowing everyone to 6i gain their own experience and find their own salvation'.

Bach came down to Wales in August 1933 to make Rock Water and walking from the Abergavenny railway station on his way into town, he would have passed Holywell Lane. The lane is old but the town has changed. The Holy Well itself must lie under what is now a car park although this was meadowland in Bach's time. Jones says this well had the Welsh name Ffynon *y Garreg-The* Rock Well. Was it here Bach made Rock Water? The name suggests that it is likely. The well was probably destroyed in the 1950s when the last section of Cybi brook (pronounced *kibby),* which once circled that part of the town's wall, was enclosed and buried in a culvert. Bradney, in *A History of Monmouthshire,* mentioned the Holy Well and how the original Benedictine Priory fell victim to the dissolution of the monasteries in the reign of Henry VIII. Priory House was built on the same site in the eighteenth century but was demolished soon after the last war. There is also a small spring beside Holywell Road, as it now is, but this cannot be *Ffynon y Carreg* since it is the wrong side of the River Gavenny. In the 1930s there were open fields here, on the outskirts of town.

Rock Water is among the most important of Bach's remedies in that it pulls into focus many of the wider ideas which lie on the periphery of his discoveries. The remedy, he says, 'brings great peace and understanding . . . brings the realization of *being* and not *doing;* of being ourselves a reflection of Great Things...'. It is not a popular remedy, few people elect to take it for themselves. And yet, it speaks to all of us who are trying to make a way in this life, trying to teach, demonstrate, learn, grow, support, parent, police—even those who are just trying to do their job properly. At one time Bach linked Rock Water to Vervain, Impatiens and Water Violet, three of the twelve type remedies, each of which could be said to have ambition to achieve something in life. The significant thought with Rock Water is that we should be a reflection of Great Things (Bach used capital letters to confirm the importance), meaning the great things which we carry as the aim for our life purpose; being a reflection 'and not attempting to put forward our own ideas'. As one

of the Helpers, Rock Water shows where we may get to on the path of life. With Gorse we have given up hope, with Oak we struggle on, with Heather we obsessively seek companionship, with Rock Water we take it all too seriously. Bach came to choose three more helper remedies, bringing the total to seven: with Vine there is a desire to exercise power, Olive people become exhausted and Wild Oat types lose their way.

10 • The Seven Helpers

BACH HAD BEEN SO KEEN to have his account of *The Twelve Healers & Four Helpers* published (by C. W. Daniel) that it had gone straight into print in the autumn of 1933. This superseded a version of *The Twelve Healers* printed privately in the spring, when he was in Marlow.' According to Weeks, he had already decided upon the three additional remedies which would bring the number of Helpers up to seven.[2] But these had to wait for the following year before they could be made and there is no mention of them in the first Daniel edition.

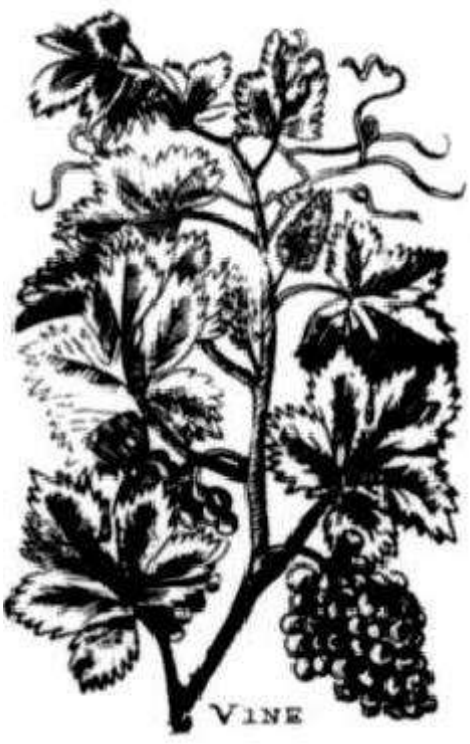
Vine & Olive

Bach did not prepare Vine and Olive himself; he asked people in Switzerland and Italy to send him the new mother tinctures.; These were proof, if such were needed, that anyone, anywhere, could make Dr Bach's remedies. Furthermore, they give the lie to any suggestion that Bach remedies must be prepared from the actual place or specimen originally found: nobody knows where these originals were made. Nor is it clear what lead him to choose them as remedies. It is possible that he saw specimens at the botanical gardens in Kew. There is a famous old grapevine at Hampton Court, dating from 1769; and many large houses had a vinery in the garden.

Olive and Vine are dissimilar emotional states but they are made from species which share the common experience of being cultivated by mankind since the beginning of recorded history. Noah, as the flood receded, sent out from the ark a dove which returned with an olive branch (`and lo, in her mouth a freshly

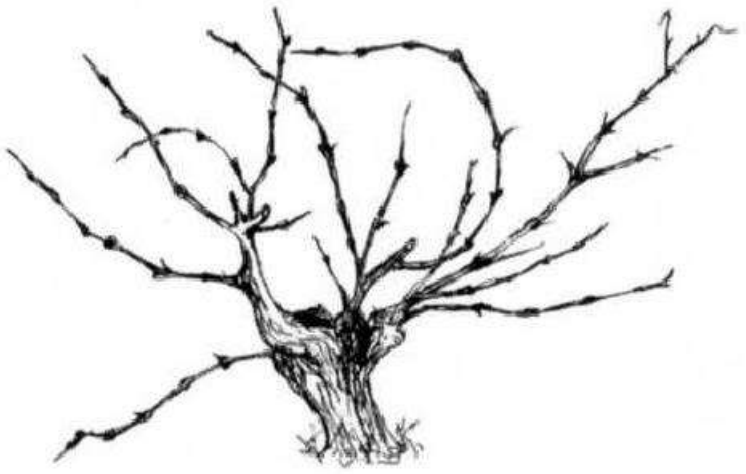
plucked olive leaf', *Genesis* 8, II). Noah was 6o1 years old when the ark came to rest near Mount Ararat, and after his long life and long voyage, he settled down. He 'was the first tiller of the soil'. He planted a vineyard. So olive trees and grapevines were closely identified with this second father of the human race. The domestication of the grapevine *(Vitis viniftra)* is thought to have begun in the Caucasus region, in the area between the Black Sea and the Caspian, while olives *(Olea europaea)* came from neighbouring Syria; both plants were selectively bred to produce more succulent and useful fruits. Their spread and cultivation through the Mediterranean and Middle East is a thread linking the history and culture of this whole area.

Vine



After Rock Water, with its historical Christian connections, Bach was continuing a line of thought. Perhaps he was drawn towards plants which, quite specifically, had a long history of association with people; plants whose basic patterning had been modified by the demands of human cultivation. One quality of the Helper remedies, after all, is that they relate to the circumstances of adults who have grown sick as a result of their way of living. In the introduction to *The Seven Helpers* he reminds us that these remedies are for people who have been ill for a long time, for patients who do not 'improve when the right one of the Healers has been given'; they have moved away from their basic type.4 The indication for Olive is deep exhaustion, the constant tiredness which grips you 'after much worry, illness, grief or some long struggle'. Vine is for people who are 'critical and exacting'.[6] Both of these species, however, have lived in a chronic relationship with human beings and suffered at the hands of civilization. How is this? Look at the process of cultivation and it is easy enough to

understand.



Left to grow in the wild, a young grapevine might be thirty or forty metres long; an old one might be hundreds of metres. Vines hang, ropelike, climbing over and through the branches of trees, trailing across the ground. But these wild vines bear no useful fruit, the grapes being small and full of seeds. So cultivated forms were bred to carry more favourable characteristics: plump, fleshy fruits which are full of juice and flavour. This is the story of domestication and plant breeding used for apples, wheat, maize: all the crops which have been developed for food.

To grow grapes the plant must be approached with a defined purpose: getting from it what is wanted. Training is necessary. This is done by pruning and tying, forcing the growth into a chosen form. Whatever the age of the grapevine, it is always cut back to a stump. When the spring comes, a few shoots begin to grow. The farmer selects from these the ones he wants, maybe two or four that will be trained out along the wires or tied to a trellis.* Other shoots are removed. Vines grow fast and the tendrils reach out, exploring the opportunity to take hold of any support, to grow up towards the light. Out from the leaf nodes come secondary shoots, but these laterals must also be pinched out. The flowering stalk of the grapevine is a modified tendril and at an early stage a selection must be made: which will be allowed to grow into flowers and which will be cut away?

After flowering, as the fruits begin

to develop, many of the clusters of immature grapes will be removed to force the plant's strength into the few remaining bunches. The leaves may be pulled from the branches to allow maximum sunlight to ripen the grapes. Even the fruit from the few late flowers at the base of the cluster may be removed so that the grapes ripen evenly and grow to the same size. The never-ending care and attention of viticulture means constant cutting and interference, limiting natural growth. When the fruit is ripe the grapes are removed, the vines cut back to the stump and all the new year's growth removed and burned. Nothing remains of all the effort. If a particular grapevine fails to produce a strong crop then the book advises that it should be rooted out. Domestic vines do not breed true to type from seed, so propagation is by cutting or grafting: more manipulation, selection and control. What a life!

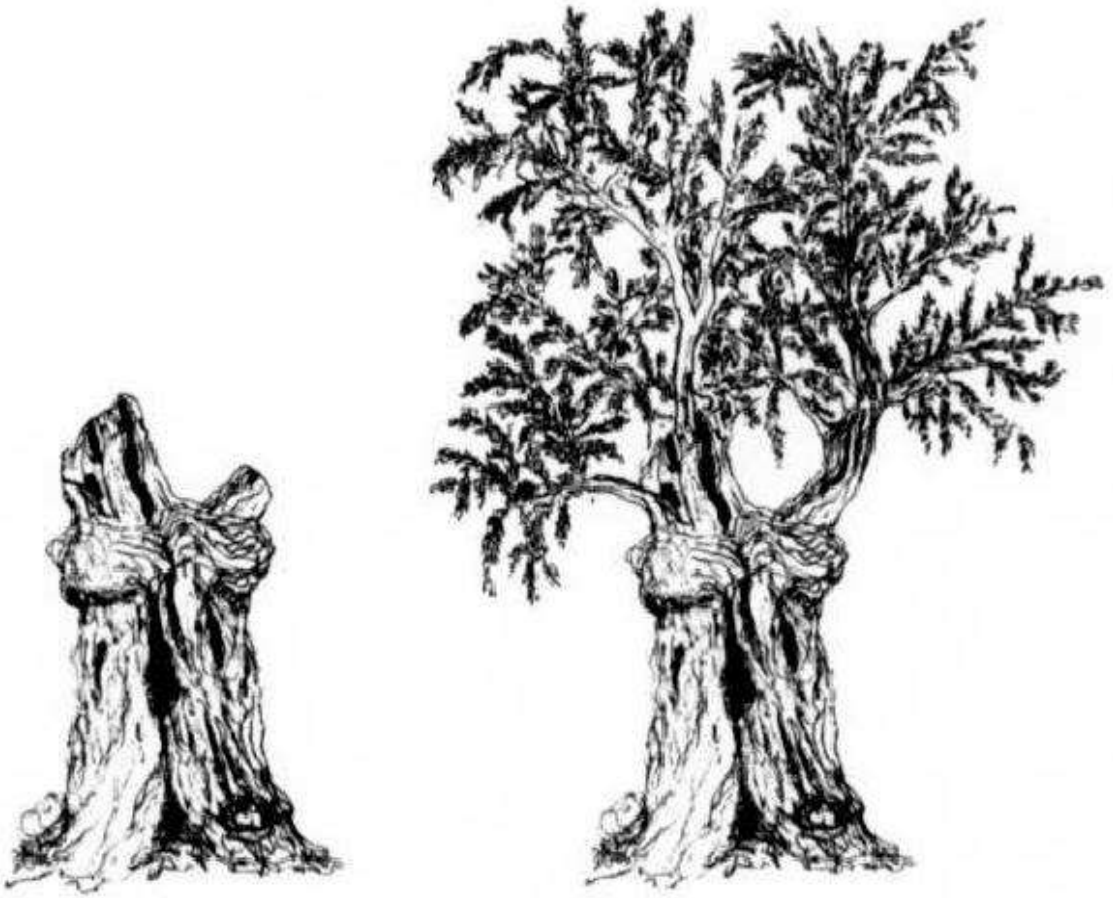
Olive

Things are not very different for the olive tree. Wild olives are small with meagre flesh, so early growers selected and developed strains which gave more oil and weight to the fruit. At the outset this must have been a normal and natural process of preference for the improved variety. But, like grapevines, olives do not breed true to type from seed. So, to farm olives, it is necessary to graft the chosen variety on to established rootstock. This means the tree's root is of one kind while the trunk, branches, leaves, flowers and fruit are of another. With grapes such grafting was also needed to establish strong, disease-resistant vines. With olives it was often done because wild olives *(Olen oleaster,* now named *0. Europaea, silvestris)* have deeper roots and are better able to resist drought.

The life cycle of the olive tree begins with the graft on to an established young plant, which is, in itself, quite a shocking procedure. The 'scion', a short piece of twig from the selected tree, is inserted under the bark of the rootstock. If the graft takes then after a few years the join will not even show a scar. As it grows, the new tree must be pruned, keeping the centre open and the branches low for harvesting. Olives flower on the young, new wood of the previous year. The tree is kept in shape by cutting out older wood, providing a few main branches and then many slender young twigs: the

reason for the characteristic 'leafy' form of the cultivated tree.

Olives flower in May and the fruits are generally harvested in the following February. Ways to pick the fruit vary but usually the branches are combed with a long rake or beaten with sticks. The fruit is gathered in nets or sheets laid out under the tree. A tree is said to continue productive life for at least a hundred years, although it may be older. Normally olive trees set fruit every second



year (trees are often exhausted by a heavy crop), but if a tree fails through age, it must be replaced. Cutting it down to the ground forces new growth from the stool. There may be many new shoots in the spring and in due course one or two will be selected as the 'new' tree—really the old tree growing again from the stump. Thus an olive tree is renewed, from the ground up. The younger limbs have a smoother, silvery bark; the old trunk is rasped, knobbled, cracked and broken. It's easy to tell new from old.

Both Olive and Vine show a pattern in cultivation which is

Old bark

chronically damaging to the species and to the land. But this is true of so much agriculture and should be no surprise. If we could identify with the grapevine, what might we feel? The depression and hopelessness of the Helper remedies; despair perhaps, and maybe a sense of fury and frustration. The Vine emotional state is said to involve a need to control, to dominate and enforce the will upon others—precisely what grapevines experience at the hands of man. With Olive, it is the constant cropping for thousands of years, the same trees in the same place, in the same soil even. No wonder the land is exhausted.

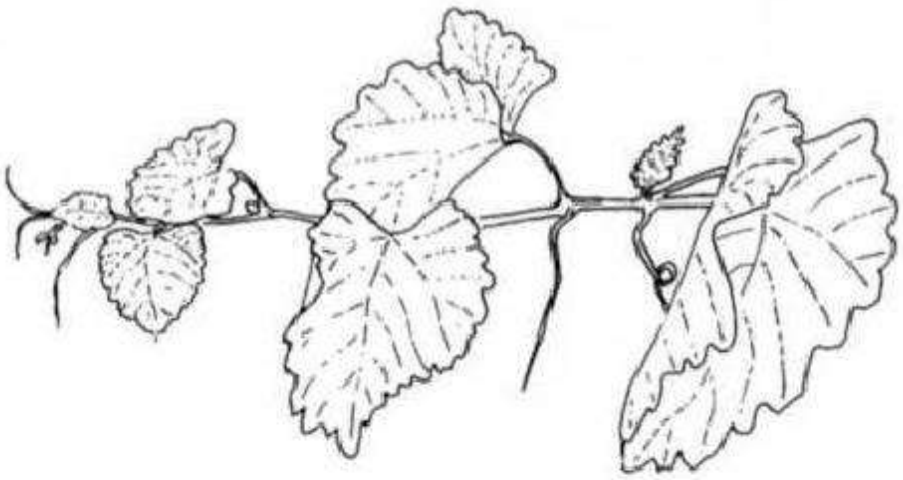
It helps to recall Bach's thought that the Seven Helpers are not soul types but chronic emotional responses to life experience (page 145). What has happened to people who develop the Vine state?

In their childhood they have found every impulse to self-expression ripped out or limited by their family. Each time they put out a new shoot it was cut or tied or trained into a particular form, maybe by a parent, or a sibling, a teacher, a bully at school or work. Whatever the individual story, the Vine types begin to learn that the only way to gain control is to follow that example and become in turn bullying, dominating, forceful adults. It is a learned approach to life.

Vine contained the basic disposition of the remedy state before all the interference of cultivation. In the gesture of the plant we can see a lack of sensitivity (smooth leaves without hairs) and a rather uncomplicated personality (the plain, simple leaf form). The plant suggests that these people lack a clear ego or identity—like Clematis (page 45) they lack the 'I' form of a strong, upright trunk—and perhaps that also accounts for the reactive need to dominate and control. Using the curling tendrils, Vines climb up and over others, gaining height by hanging on to them for support.

Charles Darwin conducted experiments with various climbing plants, including *Vitis Vinifera.* He observed how the growing shoot

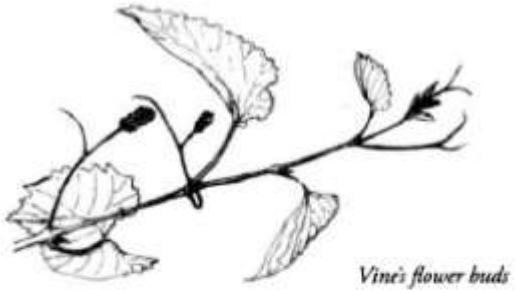
actually searches for a support and 'after a tendril has clasped any object with its extremity, it contracts spirally; but this does not occur when no object has been seized'.? This reflects the habit of the Vine person who only bullies those who can be seized upon. In its blind search, according to Darwin, the tendril can make an elliptical revolution every two-and-a-quarter hours. He made a significant distinction between the way vines climb, using tendrils, and how clematis climbs using the extending petiole of the leaf which wraps around adjacent stems. Clematis is much looser in its manner and gains stability by growing out through the branches of a tree; vines gain stability by taking a firm hold upon any support, spiralling around six or eight times, then thickening the sinews and pulling tight. The process is more powerful, although both plants achieve the same end: to get away from the earth and



into the light.

Grapevines are made to grow in many different soils. But wild vines grow naturally where the soil is red, just as *Clematis vitalba* grows naturally on white chalk. This can be seen in the rust-red (blood-red) soil in many countries, in southern Spain for instance or in parts of Greece. The strength of the Vine remedy state owes much to the powerful soil in which the plants grow. The colour comes from iron, (iron sesquioxide, Fe_2O3). The chemistry of this may be somewhat fanciful but it is possible to discern a symbolic relationship between on the one hand the white soil of Clematis, the tendency to go out of the body, anaemia and a lack of a proper respiration and, on the other, the iron in Vine, in haemoglobin and the oxygenation of the blood, in the red stalks of the wild Vine, in the fire and fury of the emotional state. Bach said of Vine patients that they are 'high coloured', that is, red in the face; but they are also worldly, directed towards the physical and the material, 'certain of their own ability'.

People in the Vine state, said Bach, are 'sure that they know what is right, both for themselves and for others . . . they wish for everything just in their own way'.'° This is a widespread condition, surely, where an attempt is made to control the world around us (as widespread as grapes and wine, perhaps). This urge for dominance is observable in the vineyard where every other plant is eradicated and bare soil is measured out by the serried lines and symmetry of planting. Wild vines run riot, by comparison, in a fluid growth of freely-expressed form: let it be, let it explore the life opportunity, that is the message. Vine people 'give orders to those helping them'" and it is this domineering control which is damaging; where Rock Water is strict with self, Vine is strict with others. Like the Rock Water remedy, Vine essence softens and gentles the heart; we



Vine's flower buds

An opening vine flower

can sense this in the softness of the flowers and the sweetness of their scent.

Vine flowers have no petals and this also shows a lack of emotional sensitivity (page 49). There is a lack of empathy towards other people and how they feel. When the buds open, the cap (calyptra) is pushed off by the developing stamens beneath. Again, the gesture is one of force and pressure rather than the gentle receptive unfolding of other flowers. Yet the flowers lead to fruits which are sweet and full of juice, carrying a generosity in a dry land. The positive side of the Vine remedy is based upon a need to give, just as Olive gives, giving until exhausted. And, if as the Gospels say 'each tree is known by its fruit', then grapes are renowned for their flavour and usefulness. Vine, therefore, is a story of almost violent contrasts.

In chapter five of *Heal Myself,* Bach wrote about the relationship of parent and child. He was concerned (probably as a result of personal experience) that family should not be a battleground of conflicting wills.

For very many their greatest battle will be in their own home, where before gaining their liberty to win victories in the world they will have to free themselves from the adverse domination and control of some very near relative.

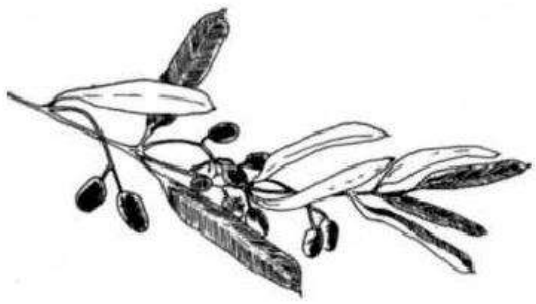
It is in the family that Vine behaviour will be learned and reinforced and in the family that gentleness, love and freedom can shape the future life. The Vine remedy has the potential to break the powerful legacy of dominance and control so often handed down from generation to generation.

Where Vine types are 'high coloured', Olive people 'are pale, wornout and exhausted'; perhaps after a long struggle with illness, grief or some worry. The condition is more than tiredness, rather it

is complete depletion. We recognize it readily enough in others, reading signs of pathological exhaustion in the eyes, the face, in body language; the dogged attempt to keep going despite the loss of pleasure and appetite for life. Bach said that 'in some, the skin is very dry and may be wrinkled'; like the dry and wrinkled bark of the olive tree."

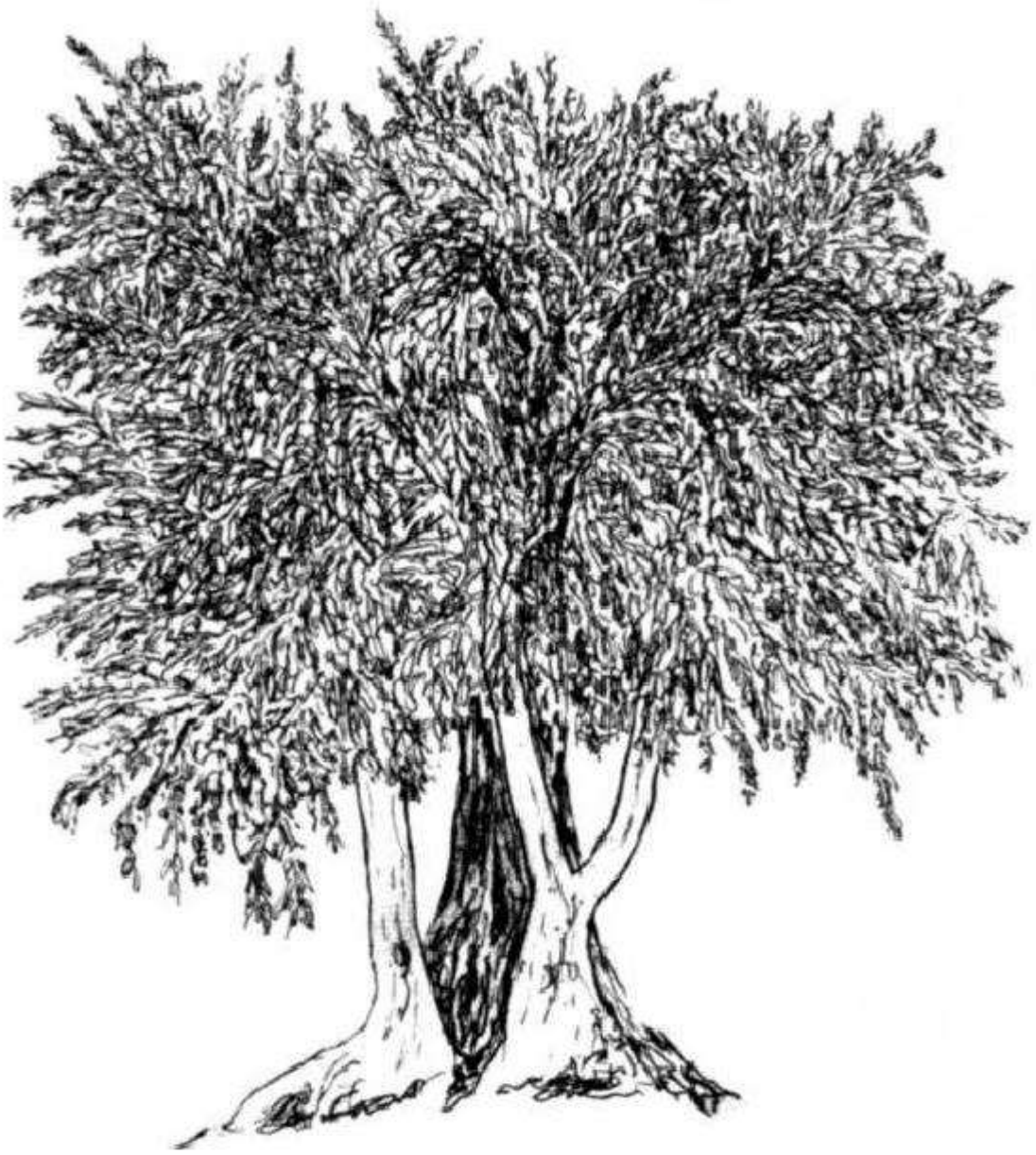
In the Mediterranean, wild vines grow in the cooler shade of any small valley or seasonal watercourse but olives grow on the open hillside. Here they are exposed to the full force of the sun. It is this burning dryness which the olive trees can withstand, indeed they love the intensity of light and crave the warmth of the sun. To obtain moisture in a dry land the olive tree has an enormous wide-spreading root structure extending far beyond the canopy of the tree. That's why olives are set well apart within a grove. Wide spacing also allows maximum light to reach all parts of the tree. The leaf is narrow, a slender ovate form, dark above and pale grey beneath: the dark absorbs light and heat while the white-grey reflects. The two tones allow the olive tree to regulate the amount of light absorbed and moderate the *effects* of temperature. Curved stalks rotate the leaves so that in high summer many move to face into the stem. This gives a shimmering effect of light and dark. As the leaves alternately absorb and reflect light there is a dynamo movement of building energy within the tree. Stand or sit beneath an olive tree on a hot summer day and you will feel the refreshing coolness of the shade but you may also enjoy the benefits of the stored energy which pulses with vitality within the tree.

Olive trees have provided useful products for mankind since the beginning of recorded history: as food; as oil for cooking, preserving, lighting and cosmetics; as medicine; and as a wood for building and ornamentation. All this has given the olive a central place within society. Consequently there are strong traditions surrounding olives and their cultivation. In his *Encyclopaedia of Bible Plants,'* [6] F. Nigel Hepper combines an account of the plant's life history with references



found in the Old and New Testament. He suggests that Job may have had the olive in mind when he lamented the short life for 'man that is born of woman' and compared it to a tree:

For there is hope for a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that its shoots will not cease. Though its roots grow old in the earth and its stump die in the ground, yet at the scent of water it



will bud and put forth branches like a young plant.

There is also the reference in Psalm 12.8 which calls for a

blessing from the Lord:

Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house; your children will be like olive shoots around your table.

Both quotations allude to the capacity of Olive for regeneration, sending up young shoots (children) from the table of the cut stump. In the New Testament there are significant references to the Mount of Olives and the Garden of Gethsemane (meaning oil press), where, while Jesus prayed, his disciples fell asleep."' In Luke's Gospel," Jesus, risen from the dead, walks with his disciples as far as Bethany, just beyond the Mount of Olives, before his Ascension. The olive tree links the experiences of exhaustion, life, apparent death and regeneration.

Those who wrote the scriptures made accurate observations of the plants in their land. In *Job* (15, 33) there is a reference to the way that the abundant flowers of the olive soon drop, and in *Deuteronomy* (28, 40) we read that the small olives may also fall from the tree—both indicative of the fact that the trees produce more than they can sustain. This suggests that like the Oak (pages 151-2), Olive is proliferous, even if the effort does not reach fruition. The energy of the tree is given outwards to the land around, like a light. We see this clearly when it comes to making the mother essence. The creamy-yellow pollen of the flowers colours spring water almost immediately so that it glows golden in the sunshine. The essence makes rapidly as the energy is quickly released.

A book on olive oil makes the comment: 'Imagine a thousand years of continuous cultivation and not an ounce of innovation'. Olive trees have been enslaved, servants of a system of agriculture which has not changed over the centuries. It is a system caring little for the balance of nature, only for what may be taken out from the land. Yet the Olive continues to give, uncomplaining, and still anoints a barren earth. It does so, as do all plants, by converting sunlight into energy. This can be utilized as oil but more particularly as a flower essence.

Noah's dove, which returned with an olive leaf, stands as the emblem of peace—a truce between God and man. We might see it as forgiveness. But of all the trees and flowers, Olive is forbearing, tolerant and continues giving of energy, long after another species would have given up. Bach says that, in the Olive state, people 'feel they have no more strength to make any effort'. The Olive remedy finds the resources for renewal. Where does this come from? From the light.

Wild Oat

Wild Oat

Wild Oat, the last of the Seven Helpers, 'is a remedy that may be needed by anyone'. This is an important distinction. Up until now Bach had differentiated according to the individual emotional state or mental outlook of the person—Gorse for the hopeless, Clematis for the dreamy—and here, with the nineteenth remedy in his new range, he settled upon something more general and universal. Wild Oat, he says, is an all-purpose remedy to use 'in cases which do not respond to other herbs [essences] or when it seems difficult to decide which to give . . .'. For those at a loss to make a choice among either the Twelve Healers or the other six Helpers then 'in all such cases try the remedy Wild Oat'; it will guide our further choice.

At the time, Bach probably did not realize he was half way through the discovery of his thirty-eight flower remedies; indeed, he may have thought himself at the end. Then Wild Oat would have tidied up any loose ends within the new system of healing. But Wild Oat is pivotal among the 38 as the only remedy which can help to orientate towards a true direction. At one point Dr Bach grouped the remedies in formation and put Wild Oat in pole position (page z8o). Another time he set all the remedies in a circle but placed Wild Oat at the centre. If the different remedies discovered up until that time helped people to understand their soul lessons or overcome chronic problems, then Wild Oat was there to help, like a compass, to rediscover the true path in life. Or, like a map it helps to show

where we are.

Wild Oat is found throughout Britain and in many parts of Europe. Reference books speak of it as frequent or common. Yet it is almost unrecognized, being only a humble Brome grass: *Bromus ramosus* (or *B. Asper* as it was). Bach must have seen it many times as he walked the lanes of southern England. It is pre-eminently a

plant of roadside and track, of hedges, banks and woodland verges. It grew originally, perhaps, inside woodland, persisting after trees had been felled, left behind in the cleared ground, a marker species. Margaret Plues in her *British Grasses* (1867) noted that it grew in 'nearly every hedgerow, especially such as border woods and shady lanes'—it is as common as ... grass. She liked Bach's Wild Oat and called it 'lordly . . . the tall stature, large panicle bending gracefully, and long branches drooping slightly in flower, and arching more and more as the ripening seed adds weight to the long spikelets . . .'. Other writers note with regret that it is a tall, coarse grass and not recommended for agricultural purposes.

It is the unusual height of *Bromus ramosus,* up to two metres, which first draws our attention. It gains height, as we might climb a tree to see where we are. But it stands as a fragile and delicate grass, moved by the slightest breeze, with none of the strength of a tree. Since it grows in shade, sheltering amongst other plants, it needs height to get into the light and gain space. But it appears rather as a plant seeking to orientate itself, facing about. The slender, tubular stems extend upwards like an aerial, the nodding heads bend over as if watching and sensing. The stems are held in a sheath which opens out into a narrow ribbon-like leaf that carelessly falls back upon itself. The sheath is covered in hairs which add to the appearance of sensitivity and make the stems shine, silvery, like antennae.

Unusually, Bach gave an indication for the duration of treatment when using Wild Oat: 'try this for at least a week' and if the patient does well, continue with it so long as they improve before changing to another remedy'. It is as if the person needs retuning, needing to resonate with the Wild Oat for 'at least a week' in order to orientate and realize the best path to take—renewing contact with ground control, so as to remember the correct route to follow.

The primary gesture of the Wild Oat is questing, growing upright and upwards. But the strong `I' form of Impatiens and Vervain is missing as the vertical movement falters and the head bends over and looks back towards the earth. Bach describes this human gesture:

Those who have ambitions to do something of prominence in life, who wish to have much experience, and to enjoy all that which is possible for them, to take life to the full [But:] *their difficulty is to determine what occupation to follow . . .*

Their ambitions falter. They want to do something, having the ambition to make a clear vertical movement, to make a mark in the world, but the I lack the firmness of purpose and the sustained will to follow through. 'They have no calling,' said Bach, as if to reinforce this idea of an outside message, 'no calling which appeals to them above all others'.

So they fall back within the mundane labyrinth of life, knowing perhaps that they might fly but lacking the initiative of a Daedalus* and the will to develop such soul qualities as are required. How might it be to see our soul's greatness beckon and not know how to move out from the shadows and into the clear light of the sun? It must lead to disappointment, 'delay and dissatisfaction'. The word 'delay' leads again to the thought of a journey: the soul's journey, the journey through life, the journey upon the path of our calling. At various times in a life we all stand at the crossroads and wonder which path to take; Wild Oat is for those who remain there, irresolute and undecided.

Bromus ramosus likes moist ground and will not normally grow in open spaces exposed to the full force of the sun: never on the hilltop or in the thin dry soil of downland where Rock Rose or Gentian are found. Other grasses grow there but not *B. ramosus.* In the sunlight a clear and strong will is needed for survival. This is not the wild oat *(Avow fatua)* seen in cornfields, a weed of cultivation. Bach just borrowed the name. His Oat prefers the dappled shade of ambivalence, the excuse of uncertainty being given as a reason to avoid action. So different to the assertive Vine people 'certain of their own abilities'. Even the flowers are constructed so as to avoid direct light.

Wild Oat flowers towards the end of July, coming late in the season. Two glumes hinge open to reveal yellow stamens (the male, pollen-producing parts) and the white feathery stigmas (the female). These all hang down from the spikelet so that the pollen dusts over the stigmas. But the glumes rarely open fully to expose them since this requires the warmth of strong sunlight. When they do open it is only for a few hours, then, after pollination, the flowering is over. As a result, Wild Oat is a remedy which can be difficult to make, the combination of weather and full flowering being elusive. Pollination often takes place while the glumes are only partially open—self-pollination. This points to the Wild Oat problem of self-preoccupation and the lack of involvement in life. Cross-pollination (page 12.6) indicates a more developed soul potential which can lead to change.

Seeds form within the shelter of the glumes and are only released at the end of summer. They appear as narrow shards weighted at one end by the kernel which remains attached to the 'lemma% a sort of sail (like the flight of a dart or arrow) which guides the seed in the wind. As the seeds fall they turn back towards the earth and spear themselves into the land (like Clematis, page 46). Each seed has short bristly hairs which act as barbs, forcing it into the earth or at least forcing it into the seclusion of the vegetation below. Thus the seeds find a protected place for rapid germination. Wild Oat is an opportunist wriggling into the shelter others create. Chancellor says of Wild Oat people: 'they have the tendency towards drifting into uncongenial environments and occupations and this only increases their sense of frustration'. The behaviour of the seed suggests that there is a perverse intention here, as though the Wild Oat person seeks out difficulty just to show the impossible nature of fate.

Nora Weeks' account of what Bach had in mind with Wild Oat focused on the need we have for 'a definite purpose in life'." People are often bored, she said, or lack any real interest in their

lives. 'They do uncongenial work, devoid of creativity, and this saps strength leading, inevitably, to ill health. In truth, Bach put it more strongly (as can be read in *Collected Writings,* see particularly *Free Thyself* Chapter 6, pages 97-98) and emphasized the need for every individual to recognize and respond to their life purpose. This is the calling of the soul to fulfil its potential and so to develop those innate qualities each one of us possesses in order to become true human beings. Our challenge, says Bach, is 'that we may realize our Divinity . . . for through that Divine Power all things are possible to us'. If the terminology (Divine Power) is an obstruction then substitute 'the power to dream' for what we dream, that we may become.

11 • The First of the Second Nineteen

BACH LEFT CROMER IN MARCH 1934 and the following month moved to the Oxfordshire village of Sotwell in the Thames Valley. Here he remained for the next two and a half years until his death. During 1934 he made one new remedy: Wild Oat. Nora Weeks suggested that it was a year of consolidation' with 'long quiet days spent working in the garden'. He made visits to London to see patients but, as far as we can tell, he settled down. He made furniture (both for *Mount Vernon* where Nora Weeks lived and Mary Tabor's house, *The Wellsprings)* and wrote *The Twelve Healers & Seven Helpers,* which came out in July. No doubt he spent time walking, as he got to know the area. This was the calm before the storm.

During the five months from March to July in 1935, Dr Bach found nineteen new remedies: an average of one every week or so. (The first nineteen had taken six years.) The process was exhausting, of that there is no doubt, since before finding a new remedy he experienced the intensity of each emotional condition the remedy would help. Once started, he was on a roller-coaster ride of feelings and mental states, impelled to find a plant which would ease the onrush of symptoms. Weeks tells us that during the winter he had begun feeling restless and sensed this indicated he was to make a new set of discoveries.[2] But it is characteristic of the Second Nineteen that they were not planned out in advance as the others had been. They were forged in the fire of immediate experience,

rather than theory.

Aspen, Elm and Cherry Plum all flower around the same time, in late February or March. Weeks said that Cherry Plum was the first to be found. She recalled that Bach had been in great pain for some days with a sinus inflammation.; As often happens with sinusitis this was combined with intense and persistent headaches. However, the physical trauma was not to be the basis for the remedy. It was the feeling he had in relation to the pain: a fear that he might lose control and be driven out of his mind. In view of Bach's medical history, his earlier neuralgia and experience of constant pain (page 38), it would seem that the emotional state was the novelty here. This was not the tension pain of the Impatiens type but a reactive mental strain: the feeling that he was losing ground in some battle for the mind. Look closely at his choice of words to describe the Cherry Plum remedy and this makes sense:

Cherry Plum

Fear of the mind being over-strained, of reason giving way, of doing fear ful and dreaded things, not wished and known wrong, yet there comes the thought and impulse to do them.

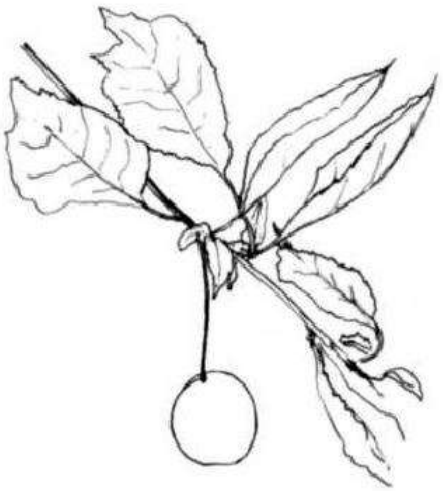
What 'dreaded thing' was he referring to? What might he have felt driven towards, knowing it to be wrong? Whence came the impulse and the thought to behave in this way? Elsewhere he spoke of impulses 'that come upon us', impulses 'to do things we should not in the ordinary way think about or for one moment consider': Perhaps for each of us the dreaded action is different: suicide, murder, cruelty, perversion, whatever dark shadow fills the mind when the light of conscience is obscured. We each know where the threshold lies which we should not and would not normally cross. This is not a great madness but a small personal battle for sanity and control. Cherry Plum, said Bach, 'drives away all the wrong ideas and gives the sufferer mental strength and confidence'.

This is very much a remedy of light and dark and if we look at the tree in flower in early spring, that is what we see: the intense white blossoms clustered on the black branches, with only the bright beginnings of green leaf buds. Cherry Plum, *Prunus cerasifera,* is the first white blossom of the year, coming before pear, cherry or other fruits, earlier than the blackthorn sloe. It is a slender, small tree with slightly drooping branches, of no great physical strength, even weak in appearance.

There are often several stems in the trunk, as though several trees are growing together, like multiple 'I' forms. The single upright trunk of Oak or Elm (page 191) betokens, by contrast, a clear and strong individuality. It is expressly the problem of Cherry Plum that this individual integrity has been breached. The same thing can be seen in the bark, which is smooth and speckled without clear energetic structure lines. Like the Aspen (pages 195-6) the emotional structure is open. But the strength of the gesture is to be found in the brilliant and exuberant flowering, not in the structure of the

trunk and branches. The scent is strong and heady and reinforces this experience. Like Olive, this tree is alight with the blaze of the spirit. It shines into the darker recesses of the mind, clearing and ordering mental confusion.

Cherry Plum is a somewhat unstable species. Many authorities seem uncertain as to how to classify it and so omit it from the listing of British trees. Miles Hadfield notes that 'in nature the cherry plum varies greatly; in those districts in which it is believed to be centred, it is said to be difficult to find two trees showing quite the same combination of characteristics'.' This parallels the instability of the emotional state. Although the flowers are almost certain to be pollinated (this can be observed as the greeny centres blush pink), fruit formation is sparse, totally absent in many years. This lack of seed production suggests a poor adaptation to the material world. Plants like Scleranthus and Impatiens, by contrast, are prolific in both production and germination of seeds. They represent emotional states where the individual is better adjusted towards life on earth. We might compare Cerato which does not readily set seed or germinate except in controlled conditions, and it also shares Cherry Plum's susceptibility to interference and the tendency to be misled. The cherries are sweet and juicy when they do form, though the colour may vary from yellow, through orange to plum red: there is no consistent standard. With the Cherry Plum state there is a pressure from the non-physical world that distorts normal boundaries, breaking through the controls which would otherwise bring certainty in the process of life. We are right to be afraid.



Although the cherry stones germinate easily, the plant has a natural tendency to sucker, sending up new stems from the root. For this reason it is used for grafting more profitable stock (plums) and is often planted as a hedge. There was a Cherry Plum hedge which Dr Bach was said to have planted at *The Wellsprings,* in Sotwell. This habit of

suckering shows the other aspect of Cherry Plum: the need to stabilize the mentality by involvement in the practical material world, where roots draw strength from the earth. So the white light of the flowers draws down the mental clarity, but the future for the plant lies in the root's regeneration within the earth. This will be a key to understanding the Second Nineteen: Cherry Plum, Elm and Aspen all throw up suckers from the root and in each case the trees fail to propagate as successfully through germination of the seeds.

Demented with the pain of sinusitis, then, Bach went out to look for help. Finding Cherry Plum in flower, the same process of resonance that he had used with the earlier remedies (page 36) came into play. He resonated the agony and fear and the flowers responded with 'mental strength and confidence'. Weeks said that he prepared a remedy using the flowers and felt better immediately. The following day the whole episode was over. He made the remedy by the boiling method (pages 199-203) not using the thin glass bowls of his previous preparations. But the nature of the remedy was the same in that the qualities of the Cherry Plum brought him back to himself. In *Ye Suffer From Yourselves* he had written that:

The action of these remedies is to raise our vibrations and open up our channels for the reception of our Spiritual Sell to flood our natures with the particular virtue we need.... They cure, not by attacking disease, but by flooding our bodies with the beautiful vibrations of our Higher Nature, in the presence of which disease melts as snow in the sunshine.'

Cherry Plum is like sunshine and snow, like the bright light of the Alps. Over many years it has been noticed that there are always a few days of brilliant sunshine towards the end of February, no matter how wet and dull the winter. It heralds the coming spring. This is the quality of light that shines in the blossom of the Cherry Plum.

Elm

Having found the Cherry Plum remedy, Dr Bach must have taken some time to reflect and consider his position. After all, he had written and published accounts of his discoveries on several

occasions and here he was, apparently, about to start all over again. What might he have felt and thought about it? In some respects a look at his life indicates that it was enjoyable discovering these new remedies. It is occasionally pointed out that making Bach mother essences today is a pleasant and rather enviable occupation. But it carries with it responsibilities and certain anxieties, even if, unlike Bach, the remedy maker benefits from knowing what to do next. For him it must have been a double difficulty. So if the message came to him that a new sequence of nineteen remedies might be in the offing (as a message had come to him at least once before), his first thought may have been 'oh no!' rather than 'what jolly fun!'. Another nineteen remedies, he may have wondered, wasn't that too much responsibility, too much for one man to bear? And then, of course, there he was, already in the second of the new mental states. At least that is how he described the remedy later on:

At times there may be periods of depression when they feel that the task they have undertaken is too difficult, and not within the power of a human being.

Elm

At the time he probably looked at it all and felt overwhelmed. He was one of

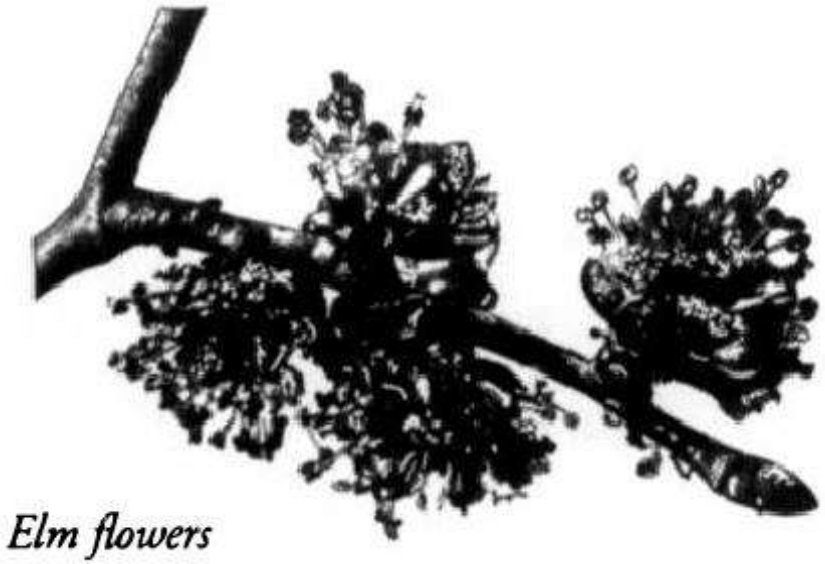
… Those who are doing good work, are following the calling of their We and who hope to do something of importance, and this often for the benefit of humanity

And yet, what he was set to do he clearly felt was beyond his strength and power. He may have decided to take a walk. Reaching for his hat and coat, and calling his dog, Lulu, he stepped out into the fresh March air. And as he went across the fields he looked up at the flowering Elm trees. These tall people, so strong and capable, were covered in a soft pink of flowers which answered the doubt and depression: all was well.

Bach's Elm is *Ulmus procera,* the Common or English Elm. In the 1930s it was one of the commonest trees of the midland counties of Britain. Druce, in his *Flora of Berkshire,* 1897, called it 'abundant, and one of the conspicuous features of our valley scenery'," although it is probably not a native. Being 'conspicuous', it was a tree which Bach must have known well enough. But it was the flowering of the tree, at that moment, which caught his eye. Again there was a resonance between the mental state and the flower, an equivalence which Bach experienced directly because of his awareness of his own emotional circumstances.

Seeds forming

The first impression of *Ulmus procera* is the massive column of wood *(procera* means tall), the huge pillar of a trunk, often more than thirty metres high when fully grown and with a girth of five metres or so. It is an erect tree with a few large upward spreading arms carrying a great density of smaller branches. When in bloom there is a contrast between the strong trunk and the flowers. One writer comments 'when the flowers are fully out in March, the whole tree glows warmly in the sunlight'. This warmth acts to lift the mood with gentle strength and determination.



Elm flowers

The flowers are complex. It is the male part of the flower which gives most of the pink colour, as the taller anthers are red until they open and shed their pollen, when they quickly blacken. This pollen is windblown, and the rate of pollination is very high. Where the flowers cluster on the end of each twig seeds form, each inside a thin, papery vessel (samara) like a flat disk. These fruits, which ripen a few weeks after flowering, are green at first giving the false impression that the tree has burst into leaf. Later, as they dry and turn brown it looks as though these 'leaves' are dying, just at the time that the true leaves are opening. Not least significant among this contrary information is the fact that not one among these perfectly-formed seeds will germinate. The English Elm is effectively sterile.

This strange fact, that the seed will not germinate, cannot always have been the case. The species must have adapted from others which were fertile originally. What does this say about the Elm remedy state? To understand it we need to consider something of the history of the species and how it manages to survive. 'There are several closely-related species of elm in Britain although it often needs a specialist to distinguish them.* The situation is complicated by the fact that many English Elms were planted in the eighteenth century for both their landscape value and utility as hedgerow trees for field enclosure. The enclosure of common land (from about 1700 to 1850) required a dense, fast-growing tree which could be laid as a hedge to contain stock. These trees were grown on from suckers and were therefore clones. John Evelyn, in *Silva, or A discourse of Forest Trees* (1664), described the process of digging a trench

Ulmus procera

twenty metres away from a mature Elm* and how, by cutting the roots there, it is possible to force new shoots to spring up. These are suitable for planting on as trees. There is a suggestion from Hadfield that similar young shoots may have been imported from France. He says the British elms are a puzzling collection, the status of them is not properly understood'.

Bach's Elm, nevertheless, is distinct from other elms. The outline and structure of the tree is significant: while *Ulmus procera* is upright, like a column, *U glabra* is more fan-shaped in form. So, while the flowers look the same, the quality of the remedy state makes Bach's Elm *(U procera)* the choice because of the strength of the 'I' form. This clear, upright gesture shows self-determination and will: the Elm state concerns those people who are strongly motivated by their soul purpose and know what they are doing in the world. Yet this species has come to a point in its evolution where it can only propagate itself by suckering, sending roots through the earth like blind moles. The comments made about Cherry Plum apply here, although the condition is made more extreme by the total lack of seed propagation. A person in the Elm state (and not for this reason alone) suffers as though blind, unable to see a future. The seed represents the future in every species; here that future is beyond reach. To make this point more clearly, look again at Impatiens (pages 33 If.) with its certainty and headlong rush to achieve its aim. Impatiens seeds are ninety-nine per cent viable. Then consider Cerato (page 116) whose seeds fail almost entirely and whose soul lesson concerns a deep uncertainty about what future to take. Elm, in this particular respect, is like Cerato:

Ulmus glabra

suddenly uncertain.

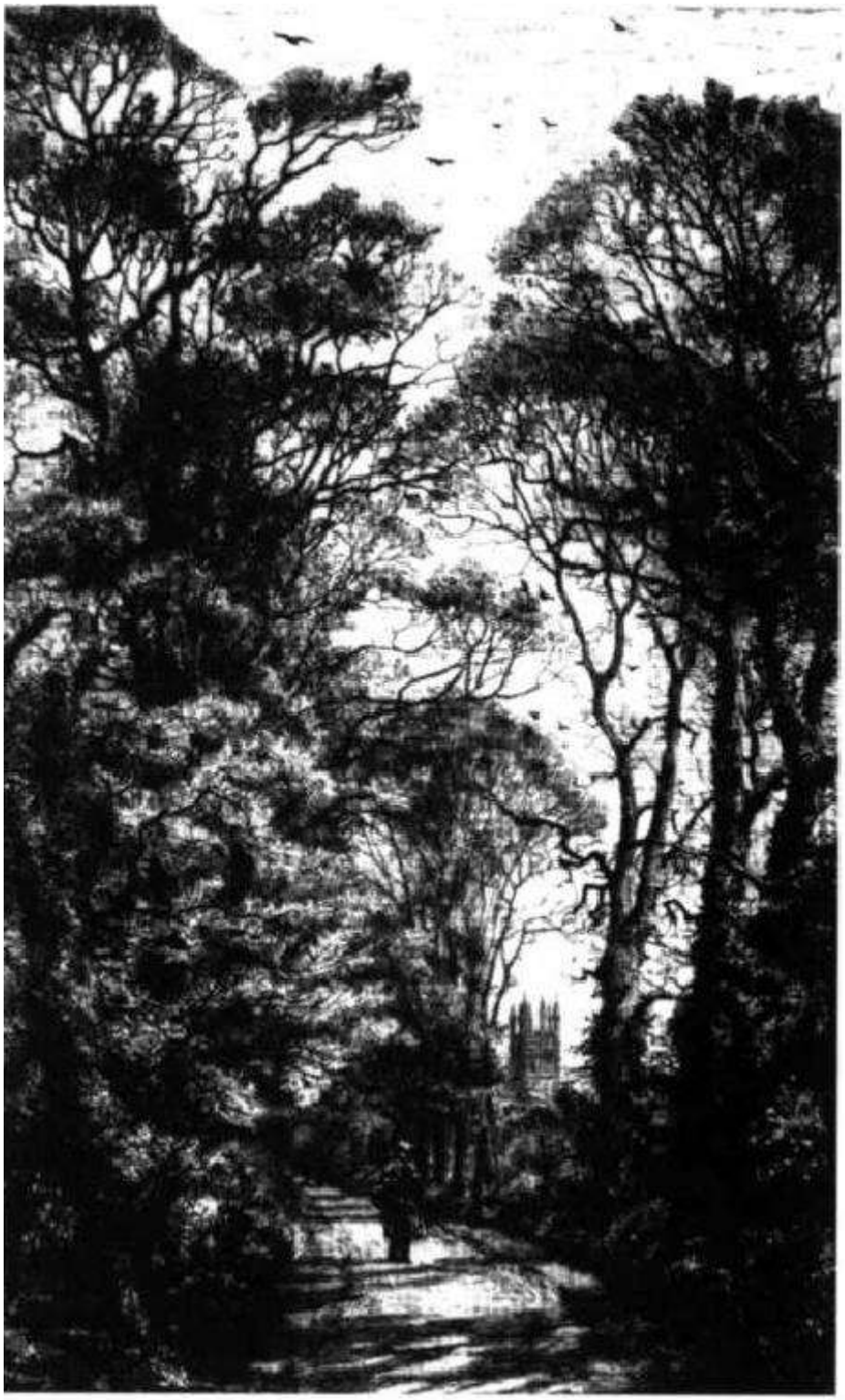
To assist with differential diagnosis compare the Oak tree and the Elm; it will illustrate the differences between remedies. Both states are for strong people who are normally effective in the world: both trees are large and expansive with hard, durable timber, although the gesture of the Oak is less vertical, more spreading and receptive. The furrowed bark of both trees has a similar picture of strength and energy in the network of force lines. The distinct differences lie in the roots, the leaves, the flowers and the seeds. The Oak person struggles on, keeping going while the Elm falters and becomes depressed. The Oak continues to work for the future, producing seeds, even in old age. By propagating through the roots the Elm shows a different approach and therefore is likely to bring about transformation in the material world. Oaks are more prosaic and more predictable—this is reflected in the smooth and simple leaf of the Oak. Elm's leaves are small, rough and hairy with a sharply toothed margin. The hairs contain a mild irritant (like stinging nettles) which stimulates the life force. Elm flowers are prominent, opening before the leaves; the reverse is true of the Oak's.

Another aspect of Elm's gesture is shown in the problems encountered with Dutch Elm Disease. First identified in 1919, it arrived in Britain in 1927 and first peaked in 1935, the same year that Bach chose the remedy. The disease is caused by a fungus, which is spread by a small flying beetle. In the 1970s a new strain of this fungus appeared, far more virulent than the first, and this progressively destroyed all the remaining mature *Ulmus procera* in the country. True, a few hybrids or closely related spe cies survived and the disease has

not attacked Wych Elm *(U. glabra)* to the same extent. By 1990 it seemed that the English Elm was finished. But not so. While the disease continues there are many trees which have grown again, from the roots of course, and there are now thirty-year-old Elms flowering once more.

These young trees continue to die, however, and they stand, stripped of their bark, alongside others which appear healthy. Dutch Elm Disease can travel through the roots, since a stand of trees will be linked together underground. These trees may come into leaf in spring but by summer the leaves yellow and die. It is a cycle of chronic infection, an illness that may never be thrown off. What may be needed is the space and time to get ahead of the problem: maybe Elm can do it with some additional stimulus, but it will need additional strength.

It has been suggested that Elm stands half way between man and nature, that it is a species not really wild but linked to man and the land. This fits with its use for hedges on farmland and to create a picturesque landscape. It has been cultivated and tamed. It grows by roads and tracks where people walk, not as a forest tree. It has become dependent upon us, for we are now the architects of the landscape. Elm has no seeds to venture out alone. As such, the tree mediates between nature and direct cultivation. In terms of the remedy, the Elm type of person is seen as well-adapted to human life, successfully following in the scheme of society; doctors, judges, priests or teachers are often cited as potentially Elm.' [7] Such people may have developed beyond simple competition for survival, living more altruistically. But uncertainty, like a virus, secretly undermines their position—supposing they are wrong? In some respects this is an interference pattern, such as Cherry Plum experiences. Here it is a sense of inadequacy, worming a way into the mind as self-doubt. Like Cherry Plum it is the massed flowers of Elm which show the power of the spirit. Elm reconnects us to the source of our true strength when we have become too rooted in the material world. No matter how important the responsibility we must learn to offer it up.



The old elms at Magdalen College, Oxford

Gilpin, writing in 1791, said of the Elm 'no tree is better adapted to receive grand masses of light?' A reminder that all plants and trees have the same, simple, self-evident purpose: to receive light. But it is pertinent to ask just what that light really is. As we shall see, these Second Nineteen remedies are directly concerned with bringing light into the world (page 2.40. If Elms do this more effectively than others it is because they have the life potential to bring about changes in human society. What does Bach say? 'Those who are doing good work, . . . following their calling, ... something of importance ... for the benefit of

humanity'. The Elm tree is their succour and support.

Aspen

Close on the heels of the flowering Elms comes the Aspen. It flowers late February to mid-March, depending on year and location. As with so many of the Second Nineteen, there is no record of how Bach came to choose Aspen, other than Weeks' comment that he experienced the emotional state of each new remedy in turn and that this guided him to the appropriate tree or plant which carried, as it were, the antidote.' So Bach was being spooked by the invisible world—he wrote of 'vague unexplainable fears' that may haunt by night or day'. In the four-line description he repeats the word 'vague' and states in three different ways that these fears have no rational explanation. Those who have experienced such a fear easily recognize the condition; a fear that 'something terrible is going to happen', although we cannot tell what!'

Aspen

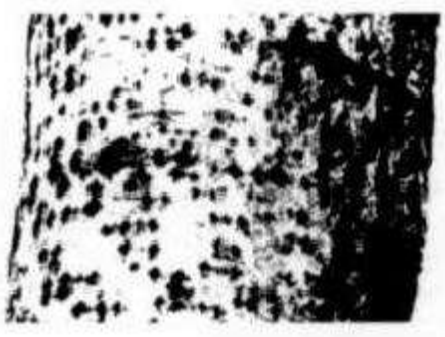
Bach's experience in finding the previous remedies suggests that he was developing as a psychic.

This carried a risk of being available to interference, as we have seen with Cherry Plum. Another risk in being open to the subtle world is feeling the full force of a destructive power which sometimes lurks, unseen, beyond the physical senses. This negativity is frightening, even terrifying, although it may be difficult to describe to others. They will say that we are imagining it! Yet Bach described how this fear might make a person tremble or sweat `from the abject fear of something unknown'.

If this Aspen fear is so subtle and yet so intense, what will be the gesture of the tree equivalent to it? With Elm, strong, capable people who are successfully dealing with the material world are helped by a tree which is tall, deeply-rooted and long-lived, with hard, durable wood. Aspen is almost exactly the reverse. It is a slight and slender tree, lacking clear shape and structure with a delicate, open form. It has a shorter life (maybe sixty years) and

never attains any substantial size, growing to about fifteen metres or so. While Elms grow in parks and farmland, Aspen is much more adventurous. Being a pioneer it grows up to the boundaries of climate in the north. It is often the first tree to appear in open ground. As a species Aspen is easily overlooked, for while it is a pretty tree its appearance is nondescript. In textbooks it often gets only the briefest mention in comparison to other more significant poplars. Aspen struggles to maintain a place in the world.

Details of the tree's gesture, describing the emotional state, are clear to see. First there are the leaves which tremble and flutter in the slightest breeze. The Latin name *Populus tremula* and the French name *Tremble* both recognize this. Aspen, then, is said to be for that trembling fear; it is a literal picture. This shaking movement of the leaves is most pronounced and invariably observed. Lauder (1834) said of Aspen 'there is a superstitious notion among the vulgar, that the tremulous motion of its leaves was occasioned by its having been the wood of which our Saviour's cross was made'. Johns notes the same belief and makes the comment: `This peculiarity obtained for the Aspen the unenviable distinction of being selected as the poetical emblem of restlessness, inconstancy and fear'. There is no rational basis for the idea that the tree trembles because of the Crucifixion. Johns is rather pedantic in dismissing the notion as superstition, which of course it is. But his appeal to reason with an account of *how* it is the flattened stalk which causes the leaf to flutter does not explain *why* it does so. It is usual to point to some competitive advantage for the plant in its form and behaviour. But there is no credible case here for evolutionary benefit. What the 'poetical emblem of restlessness' tells us is that the tree is a picture of trembling fear, just as Oak is a picture of strength and endurance. Both trees have been written into folklore in the attempt to explain the gesture and form of their growth.



The image of the trembling leaf is reinforced by the quivering tension felt in the trunk of the Aspen tree. This is a perceptible shaking; it can be sensed if you stand with your back to the tree. Aspen is the remedy for people shaking or trembling in a similar way, either mentally or physically. For the most part the trunk is silvery smooth, though it begins to become furrowed with age. The clean surface of the bark is a sheaf of protection, though it is marked in places by strange black diamonds, drawn like stuttering runes on the trunk. The flowers tell us little more, although their soft grey hairs speak of an etheric sensitivity, hidden and mysterious. Male and female flowers grow on separate trees as pendulous catkins looking rather alike, at least at first glance. Significantly, both types of flower grow outwards from the bud and then downwards towards the earth. While Agrimony (page 96) or Vervain (page Los) flower along a vertical stem growing away from earth, pointing to the sky, Aspen does the opposite. To escape from this fear of the unknown and unseen, a person in the Aspen state needs to be pointed towards physical reality, just as someone waking from a nightmare reconnects to ordinary dimensions of life in this world.

When the seedpods of the female swell and break open, a white fluff containing seeds is carried far away from the parent tree on the wind. These seeds can germinate within a day if they fall on damp earth. Aspens crave light and will generally only grow on the fringe of woodland, lurking on the edge of the tree community. The roots are shallow, with 'the root-branches running almost horizontally';" an observation also made by Johns.' This indicates superficial contact with the material world: trees with deep-diving roots represent a stronger involvement with life at a physical level. Like the Elm and the Cherry Plum, the Aspen sends up suckers from the root: a sign of the hidden forces at work.

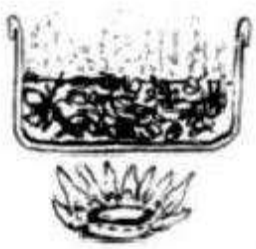
There is little evidence of the positive aspect of the Aspen state. The growing strength of the Aspen as it nears the earth can be seen: the trunk begins to furrow at ground level, showing a stronger network of energy. But this is not a clear emblem of the strength which overcomes fear. It might be indicated in the golden-yellow leaves of autumn, which fall to earth early but are slow to rot. However, when the essence is made by the boiling method (page 199)

the scent of balsam is strong, sweet and aromatic. The mother tincture is plum-coloured, or light claret. It shows a gentle warmth and fire which penetrates the grey mists of early spring, driving away the occult penetration, bringing peace.

Bach commented of Aspen that 'sufferers often are afraid to tell their troubles to others?' This silent apprehension, a kind of quiet anonymity, is apparent in the tree. Yet of all Bach's remedies, the Aspen most clearly proclaims its trembling fear. It is among the easiest to see and understand of the plant gestures. The signature of the tremulous leaf has been noted by poets since Chaucer, but Bach was the first to make the connection between this and the healing potential of the flowers. He saw how the qualities of Aspen inform the tree and how they resonate the positive expression of strength and protection, protection from a fear of the supernatural.

12 • The Boiling Method

THESE NEW REMEDIES were prepared using a new method. While the First Nineteen had all used 'The Sunshine Method', Bach now introduced 'The Boiling Method': It is hard to fathom why he did this —he left no written explanation. Certainly the weather in February and March, when he went to make Cherry Plum, Elm and Aspen, was likely to have been an immediate problem. Bach needed to make the essences at once as he was struggling with the discomfort of the emotional state. Waiting for clear, sunny weather could have meant an indefinite delay in these early months of the year. In addition, as Nora observed, 'the sun in early spring has not the strength it gains later...'. But there has never been a satisfying explanation as to why Bach chose to *boil* the flowers, nor why he continued to use the boiling method on into the summer, when he found others in the series of the Second Nineteen.



In *The Twelve Healers,* the description of the process is terse:

The specimens, as about to be described, were boiled for half

an hour in clean pure water. The fluid strained off poured into bottles until half filled, and then, when cold, brandy added as before to fill up and preserve.]

It comes down to that simple process: boil for half an hour. As with the sun method (pages 59 ff.) it is important to select the site, to ensure that the flowers are freshly opened and at the peak of flowering. A bright day is the best choice, but the weather needs to be good rather than perfect. As before, there are things to do before setting out, such as collecting fresh spring water and preparing all the necessary utensils.

The flowers are picked with about fifteen centimetres of twig, flowers, buds and leaves so that they fit within a twenty-centimetre saucepan. A white enamel pan is best. Secateurs may be needed. Flowers are gathered from several different trees where possible, so as to three-quarters fill the pan. With the lid on, take it to the cooking stove—maybe a portable gas burner or the stove at home, if nearby. Gas is a better source of heat than electricity or solid fuel; it is more direct and does not carry any electro-magnetic charge.

A measured two pints (Li litres) of fresh spring water is poured into the saucepan. With the lid off, the water is brought to the boil and then simmered for thirty minutes. Then, replace the lid and put the saucepan outside to cool. The liquid is later filtered and, as with the sun method, an equal volume of brandy is added to that portion of the essence to be saved. This mother tincture will be stored in a dark-glass bottle, labelled and kept in a cool, safe place. All the utensils need to be carefully cleaned and boiled before they are used again.

There is something rather shocking about this boiling. It is a more physical process, with less of the delicacy and

fineness of the 'thin glass bowl' and the ethereal, dancing light of the sun method. To stand and watch as the flowers wilt and then brown in the heating water is to witness some kind of disintegration. The colour and life go out from the flowers, forced out rather than released, taken rather more than given. As the liquid comes to the boil it quickly takes colour from the plant material. And, as steam rises, there is a constant agitation of small droplets which fizzle on the surface of the water, bouncing, it seems, into the air. This appears to be the reverse of the air bubbles that form within the bowl in the sun method.

The rising steam carries a scent of the essence: with Cherry Plum it is almonds, with Chestnut Bud a spicy, sugary smell, with Star of Bethlehem it is fresh and sweet like a pleasant cooked cabbage; Willow is the same. The Star essence, when it has cooled, also has a strong, tangy taste with a golden, greeny-yellow colour, brilliant. Pine tastes like old timber, fousty and dry; Holly can be an intense, bright green (from the leaves); Elm makes a thick, syrupy liquid which is slow to filter; Walnut is dark amber, impenetrable; Sweet Chestnut and Hornbeam both have a sharp taste which is strong and stimulating. Red Chestnut makes a deep plum-coloured essence. Each has a specific character in taste, colour and smell.

Significantly, only those remedies selected by Bach utilize the boiling method. Essence makers who have followed after him, whether in California, Australia, or elsewhere in Britain and Europe, have all worked with the sun method. Perhaps Bach would have used the sun if it had been available. The various attempts to explain the enigma of 'the boilers' seem to make this assumption. Weeks, as cited above, suggested that the early spring sun was not strong enough to make an essence. And yet Bach had made Gorse by the sun method in April. Furthermore, she does not explain why he continued to use the boiling method in May, June and July of the year when, surely, there would have been sun enough. Could it be that 1935 was particularly cloudy with few suitable days? Records show that during May and June there was average bright sunshine and it was exceptionally fine weather in July.* So poor weather does not explain matters. It is sometimes said that the Second Nineteen were trees and woody shrubs; being tougher they

needed to be boiled. But even this is a partial truth since several are delicate, fleshy plants such as Star of Bethlehem and Mustard, or the soft flowers of Red Chestnut and Wild Rose.

Is there any significant difference between the sun and the boiling methods? Some people have made a boiling remedy (like Star of Bethlehem) using the sun and consider the resulting essence to be every bit as satisfactory. Although both methods use the same spring water and similar flowers, there is a clear departure in the quality of the fire element which actually does the making. Both are using the energy of the sun to bring about a transformation in the making of the remedy. The difference is that sunlight comes from outside our planetary system while fossil fuels come from within the earth. Having been through a number of processes of transformation, photosynthesis being the first, the sun's energy has been changed when it becomes the fire used for cooking. Light from the sun has been metamorphosed into fire in the form of the three other elements: earth, water and air—making coal, oil and gas. It is this quality of transformation that becomes characteristic of the boiling remedies. Bach says of the Second Nineteen:

There is no doubt that these new remedies act on a different plane to the old. They are more spiritualized and help us to develop that inner great self in all of us which has the power to overcome all fears, all difficulties, all worries, all disease.

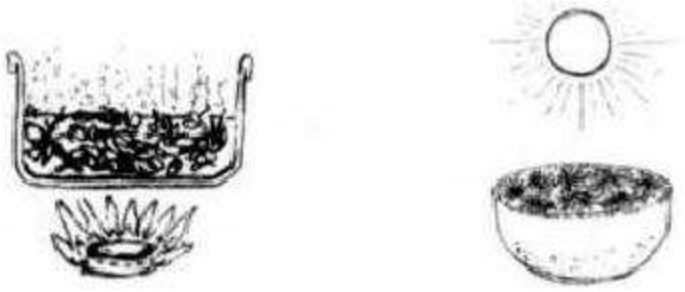
What does he mean by 'more spiritualized'? The remedies are not a quick or easy path to spiritual enlightenment. But working with these emotional states is doing the real work which leads to spiritual development. Overcoming life difficulty leads to the evolution of soul qualities. In other words it is the work done to transform suffering into learning, pain into insight, disease into health which leads to spiritual growth. Learning comes through the experience of difficulty; no knowledge comes from ease. We become transformed by going through the fire. And it is just this relationship which makes the boilers distinct. They are remedy states people experience as a result of difficult life-involvements; they arise in reaction to life problems. And being prepared by the boiling method, they have this common theme of pressure, intensity

and, indeed, pain.

It is for this reason that 'suffering' is often associated with these later remedies. Bach had 'great suffering to bear' according to Weeks and the word is used frequently to convey the difficulty he worked through: But making this a slightly Christian virtue (He suffered for our sins) is to miss the point. The suffering is the process of transformation and the remedies serve to help us find a way in it, before removing it from our path.

Disease is the result of wrong thinking and wrongdoing, and ceases when the act and thought are put in order. When the lesson of pain and suffering and distress is learnt, there is no further purpose in its presence, and it automatically disappears.'

So it is the failure to learn the lesson which leads to the suffering. Suffering also comes from resistance, when struggling to sustain a situation against the weight of what happens in life. It is actually the root meaning of the word: Latin *suffere,* to sustain, which comes from *sub* in the sense of 'up from underneath', and *ferre* to carry [Chambers]. So the sense is of carrying up from underneath. This is just what the fire does in the boiling method, thus confirming the image of upward growth in the evolution of the soul.



This carrying up from underneath is important. The energy of the sun is given and received, falling from above. The fire that comes from within the earth burns beneath the essence. It carries the energy upwards on the return journey. This parallels the journey of the individual who incarnates on earth and grows back along the path of soul evolution. *The Twelve Healers* described the qualities of twelve types of descending soul. The boiling remedies describe the pathway of the ascending soul

and the varying experience of life-lessons which attend the return.

So the boiling method brings more to the preparation of the mother essence than a convenient alternative to the sun's rays. The process is different. Just as the flowers collapse and disintegrate in boiling water, so old patterns are broken down as change enters our life. Water and fire act together to soften and dissolve; gentle and fierce. Resistance to change causes suffering and that suffering is like a cooking for the soul.

13 - Holding Back from Involvement in Life

Chestnut Bud

THE THOUGHT THAT PEOPLE SUFFER in order to learn, or rather that failure to learn brings suffering, may have been uppermost in Bach's mind as he approached the next of the remedies: Chestnut Bud. This one, he said, is about making full use of observation and experience to 'learn the lessons of daily life'.' Some people only need to have an experience once and they learn from it what they need to know and build that into their life patterning. Others find they need to repeat the experience, often several times, before it becomes effectively a part of them. Bach speaks of these lessons in terms of 'error' and 'fault', so we may suppose that he has quite specific experiences in mind.

What kind of thing, then, was Bach thinking about at this time with Chestnut Bud; what were these lessons? Where might the feeling arise that he was failing to learn from experience? He may have been concerned with his work, or his relationships, or, thirdly, progress with his personal life purpose. We can only guess. But considering what his situation may have been does give a context for the meaning of Chestnut Bud. At this time Bach was living at *Wellsprings,* in Sotwell, with Mary Tabor. Nora Weeks lived at *Mount*

Vernon, possibly with Victor Bullen for company.* His group of close friends also included the Wheelers. It is likely that some entanglement in their relationships led Bach to think, with regret, of either his or their failure to learn from past experience. We often say of other people that they head straight into the same kind of situation as they have just left, be it employment, a love affair or just a dream. Chestnut Bud applies to such experiences as soul guidance to understanding, helping people to learn what is really happening. Like an able counsellor, the remedy shows how patterns of behaviour are repeated and the consequences of that.

In Dr Bach's work, the discovery of new remedies, there was also the risk of making 'the same error on different occasions'. He was involved in a complex process of learning and teaching, listening and talking simultaneously. With these boiling remedies he had to study himself and his emotional responses most closely and yet still allow guidance and intuition to speak to him. If he had felt depressed and overwhelmed with Elm and frightened with Aspen and Cherry Plum, it may be that at this point he lost track of what he was being shown. A Chestnut Bud situation is like the game of *Snakes and Ladders:* one can fall back into old ways of thinking and acting, slip away from knowledge and experience achieved through hard work. Bach said, life is Tor the purpose of gaining all the knowledge and experience which can be obtained through earthly existence . . .'.[2] But at times we fail to *see* that. If experience is repeated without gaining knowledge, it must be repeated yet again. Was Bach being shown something that he failed, at first, to see?

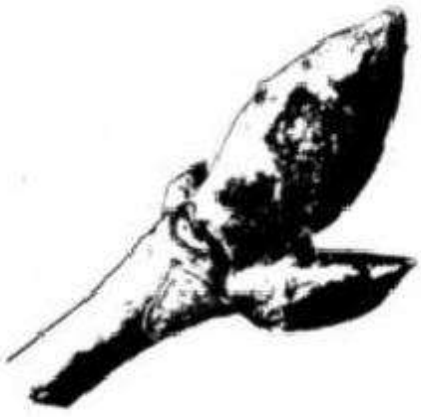
Error, fault and failing are words which appear frequently in Bach's writing. 'Our whole object is to realise our faults . . . Disease is entirely and only due to faults within ... The only cure is to correct our faults ...'[3] So look carefully at Chestnut Bud as the remedy which most definitely helps in the recognition of error. Recognizing these personal failings is the most important task for life on earth:

An understanding of where we are making an error (which is so often not realized by us) and an earnest endeavour to correct the fault will lead not only to a lift of joy and peace, but also to health.

This brings us to the third context for Bach of Chestnut Bud: the progress he was making in his personal life purpose. He had an operation for cancer in 1917[5] and *sarcoma* was given as joint cause of death (with cardiac failure) on his death certificate in 1936. His whole adult life was a struggle with 'the real cause and cure of disease'. Maybe as the Chestnut leaves were unfolding, Edward Bach had to re-examine his personal understanding of his own health and how it related to his soul's purpose. Perhaps the spectre of a dragon long slain rose again to frighten him. No small issue this, but then the boiling remedies are not dealing with small matters. When considering how Bach saw the relationship between body and soul, it helps to read his 'fundamental truths' in *Heal Thyself.*

Thirdly, we must realize that the short passage on this earth, which we know as life, is but a moment in the course of our evolution, as one day at school is to a life, and although we can for the present only see and comprehend that one day, our intuition tells us that birth was infinitely far from our beginning and death infinitely far from our ending. Our Souls, which are really we, are immortal, and the bodies of which we are conscious are temporary, merely as horses we ride to go a journey, or instruments we use to do a piece of work.'

So, to him, any bodily illness was of little account. But that is precisely the context of faith and knowledge which is hard to achieve and easy to fall away from. The life lesson may need to be shown more than once before it is understood.



The Chestnut Bud remedy is prepared, not from flowers but from the opening buds of the Horse Chestnut tree, *Aesculus hippocastanum.* This is one of the first big trees to break into leaf. While there are aspects of the tree's gesture which are relevant (like the broken pattern in the bark, see White Chestnut page 253), it is specifically the stage of

bud-burst which characterizes this essence. The Chestnut, then, is emblematic of all trees in every spring. Each bud has formed in the previous season; we can even see the scar of the last leaf. Within the closed bud lies all the potential for new growth and development—miniature leaves, stems and flowers lie closely folded inside.

As the bud opens and the shoot explores its unique pathway into space, into the life of the tree within the year, it unfolds individually within a set pattern of potential. Each bud is from the same blueprint but expresses a single and unique form. It is like the individual person exploring the potentials within a life. In every life there are opportunities (`it contains the lessons and experiences necessary at the moment of our evolution ...') and the only question is whether the opportunity to learn is taken. That is where the Chestnut Bud remedy comes in. Those who fail to learn and grow into their potential 'do not take full advantage of observation and experience ...'.

Why is this remedy made from leaf buds and not from flowers? Because spring leaves are so expressive of a new season, of new beginnings and new growth. They develop moment by moment before our eyes. But leaves are also the organ of respiration. They absorb light and air to create, through photosynthesis, the energy which sustains life on earth. This physical activity parallels the way experience and observation lead to learning and sustain the life of the soul. Respiration works at many levels. Living efficiently means taking in life experience and building from it soul qualities. That is, saying 'yes' to the lessons of life.

Chestnut Bud is often described as a remedy for children, either slow learners or for the foolish person who does not make supposed progress in life. Young buds may equal young people. But anyone can become stuck in life and need help. And this way of freeing up learning for the soul means a person may usefully take Chestnut Bud even on the day before death. Most of life, after all, is spent repeating the pattern of the past.

Larch

Next came Larch. This remedy helps those 'who feel they will never be a success';'° people whose confidence in themselves is low. This is a natural sequal to the Chestnut Bud experience in that, even if the lesson to learn can be seen, it may still be felt that failure will follow. It may be clear enough what must be done to fulfil the life purpose, but such people hang back because `they do not consider themselves as good or capable as those around them'." For Bach it seems again to point to self-questioning and self-doubt. The challenge is there but not the will to succeed. We know that Bach did succeed; yet Larch was one of the stages of difficulty to deter and delay him. That is characteristic of the boiling method remedies: they represent difficulties overcome on the pathway of life.

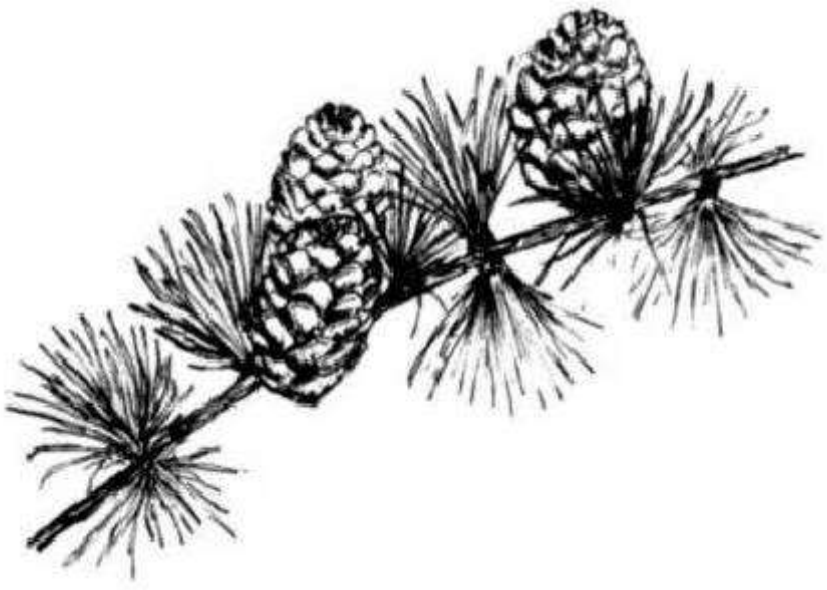
The Larch condition is not inherent, not something we are born with, not integral to the soul. It grows up as a response to trauma, a response to a particular setback. After an accident there may be a loss of confidence. Larch is there for those who have engaged with life, taken a knock and subsequently feel defeated. Larch calls for the attempt to be made, even at the risk of failure. Bach described this situation by saying that these are people who 'do not venture or make a strong enough attempt to succeed'." We all know this, surely. It is not only Scots who are brought up on the story of Robert the Bruce and the persistent spider which kept rebuilding its web. It was an Irish poet, Thomas More, who wrote:

There was a little man, and he had a little soul, And he said, 'Little Soul, let us try, try, by'.

And an Englishman, William Edward Hickson, who wrote: *If at first you don't succeed Try, try, again.*

Larch is the 'try again' remedy.

Observations on other of Bach's plants suggest that the form of the Larch tree should be either very forward and confident or else tentative and hesitant. In fact it is both. The Larch is another immigrant species to the UK; *Larix decidua* was probably not introduced until about 1620. If it was here at an earlier date it was very scarce. The reason why it was introduced and then grown so extensively is its strength and adaptability. It can grow in quite rugged and adverse conditions. The great plantings of Larch by the Fourth Duke of Athol in the eighteenth century (said by some to have grown twenty-seven million trees on 15,000 acres of barren land) were a recognition that it was strong enough to grow on the rocky and hilly ground of Scotland. Seeds and seedling trees were originally brought from Italy, where Larch thrives in the Alps and the Apennines, and more recently from Germany. The new forests were economically viable because Larch is a particularly durable and



useful timber for shipbuilding, poles and pit props. It grows fast and straight, with a single trunk and few branches. Yet, despite this forwardness and apparent strength, the Larch is sensitive to pollution and prone to fatal diseases, just like the Elm (page 192). This is probably due to monoculture and over-planting in unsuitable conditions. But it is nonetheless indicative of an inherent weakness in the species.

Larch seed forms within the shelter of a cone (Larch is a conifer, like pine or fir) and has a small wing which will carry it some distance on the wind. Like Clematis, Wild Oat, and Hornbeam, the Larch seed illustrates a tendency to drift in life: there is a temporary dissociation from any involvement in the material world. When the seed lands, germination is uncertain but seedlings may root in the cleft of stones or in some small ledge where others cannot succeed. This habit contrasts with other species which require altogether easier conditions and more fertile soil in which to grow. Like Mimulus (page 52) Larch braves difficulty. In Evelyn's *Silva* (1786, Hunter edition) there is a footnote concerning Larch:

. it is remarked that those trees which have been planted in the worst soils and the most exposed situations, have thriven the best, which is a great encouragement. Some trees cannot bear too great a luxuriancy...

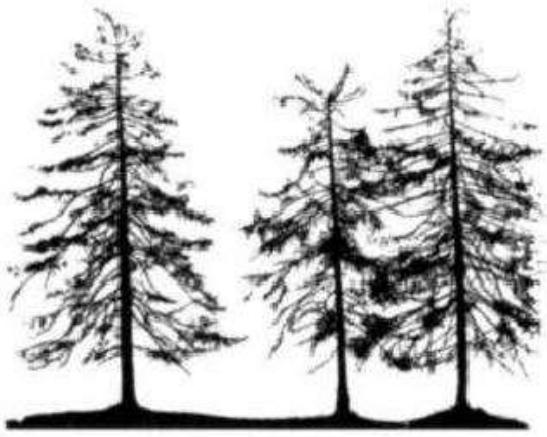
There is a story that the first Larches planted in Scotland were imported with some orange trees. The Larches failed when put into the hothouse with the oranges but, when thrown on to the rubbish heap, given up for dead, they quickly revived and grew into strong trees.'4 Larch seedlings are easily set back ('being rather prone to damping off and sun scorch') so that discouragement can set in early. Equally Larch cannot survive in waterlogged ground, preferring to use an extensive root system to search for moisture. As with Scleranthus (page no), this indicates a need for deepening involvement with the material world.

Larch starts out as a typical conifer with a small vertical shoot breaking into six to eight thin, needle leaves which radiate like the spokes of a wheel. For the first four years it is an evergreen.

Thereafter the young tree becomes deciduous, the leaves turning yellow, then brown and finally dropping to the ground. This behaviour is unique among British trees. It emphasizes the point that Larch begins life in a normal way, like other conifers, and then, suddenly, changes. The way the leaves brown, yet remain on the tree through the autumn and early winter, has prompted the observation that every year Larches give the impression they are dying. The poet William Wordsworth, who took a strong dislike to the Larch for some reason, wrote:

... in winter, it is still more lamentably distinguished from every other deciduous tree of the forest; for they seem only to sleep, but the Larch appears absolutely dead.

In practical terms this may be a strategy for survival, allowing the tree to grow in the mountains up to 1,500 metres in the Alps and up to 55o metres) in Scotland. But the poetical image of a tree giving up on life is a more pleasing explanation. Compare the unremitting struggle of the Oak (page 151), which never stops trying, with the apparent inclination of the Larch to give up at every opportunity.



In several respects the form of the Larch tree may be regarded as the inverse of Impatiens. The Impatiens

person is sure of himself, reflected in a clear and powerful geometry within the structure of the plant. Larch is lacking just that confidence and this is reflected in the slender, drooping branches which hang from the trunk like loose-slung cables reaching out towards the earth; at the tip they turn upwards, as if trying, at the last, to lift their line. Indeed, the young side shoots begin by growing upwards at an angle but slowly bend under their own weight. This downward swooping gesture may help to shed snow which otherwise could weigh down the branches and snap them off. But it strongly expresses the Larch remedy state which collapses without resistance, not asserting the will. This is seen in the growing tip of the tree which seems to lose the impetus of going upwards, and curves over, flattening out at the top.* It seems the effort of vertical growth cannot be sustained.

Yet the Larch does, eventually, build a powerful, columnar trunk. It is a fast-growing tree, reaching a height of twenty-five to thirty metres in fifty years. It then only increases in girth, living 200 years in some cases. The timber is resinous (trees used to be tapped for turpentine) and is resistant to both fire and water. So, in the end, it has a strength and stature which speak of the positive quality of the remedy. When the tree is young the bark is scratchy and irregular, flaking like dried skin. As the trunk expands the bark seems unable to grow at the same speed, so that cracks appear. Sticky sap oozes from the crevices like a weeping eczema. This is milky-white and strongly aromatic. It is as if growth is painful for

the tree. The painful and traumatic experience which lies behind the shaken confidence of the Larch state, perhaps? When it is older the bark develops vertical fissures, though these lack the strongly networked structure of Elm, Oak or Sweet Chestnut.

Larch flowers in April, with spring. Males and females appear together on the same branch. The males are smaller with yellow, rounded pollen-producing sacs; they point downwards from the underside of the branches. The females are purple-red, sitting upright on the top of the twigs. The flowers do not open from a bud, but, like all conifers they are gymnosperms (meaning 'naked seeds') so they grow with an exposed ovule which is waiting for pollen to fall.* Each ovule is protected by a small bract. After pollination this continues to grow and will, in time, help to form the cone. Positioned as they are it is certain that pollen will fall from the males on to the females. Pollination is inevitable; it cannot fail. Every flower makes a cone; these remain attached to the branches for several years waiting for windy, dry weather which will shake the seeds free. So Larch has a history, a long story of the past to tell: the several generations of the cones are evidence of continuity.

Male and female Larch flowers

Larch is a pioneer species: it grows on the frontier where conditions are hostile; in cold, wet, poor soils. Only a tree with great determination can make it. So a strategy has developed which allows it to wait for favourable conditions. But not only self-propagation is planned for. Because Larch is deciduous, dropping its leaves each year, it slowly builds a nourishing loam on

the ground. It is a tree that helps to build soil; this is said to be because it puts in calcium. Most conifers poison the earth with acidity. Larch has leaves which rot more quickly and is by far the best improver of heath or moor pasturage known in this country'. This is success for the tree and then success for the land use thereafter. When a tendency to expect failure is overcome, determination and success follow, making a strong contribution to the evolving consciousness of life on earth.

Hormbeam

There is a third remedy which fits into this little group concerning people who are holding back from involvement in life: Hornbeam. Bach did not note the order of discovery, nor did Weeks, but Hornbeam flowers at the same time as Larch and has certain qualities in common. While Larch stands back through lack of confidence, Hornbeam stands back through lack of determination and strength. It is 'for those who do not feel they have sufficient strength, mentally or physically, to carry the burden of life placed upon them...'. Once again Bach is feeling burdened. This time the burden is not responsibility, as it was with Elm but the weight of work, the slog of it, the feeling that too great an effort is required. The shift in emphasis is really quite subtle between these early boiling remedies. It can be explained clearly enough, however, by visualizing Bach at this time and allowing ourselves to resonate with his state of mind. He knows how to do his present work (Chestnut Bud), he has regained the personal confidence to attempt it (Larch) yet he cannot quite shake himself into action, he still cannot, as it were, get out of bed. Why? Because 'some part of the mind or body needs to be strengthened before they can easily fulfil their work'. Note the use of 'easily'. It can be done but it is such a great effort.

Hornbeam, *Carpinus betulus* is a deciduous hardwood. In the textbooks it is invariably called inconspicuous, little known and

with few distinguishing characteristics. This may often be true, but when the tree is in flower it is sensational, a magnificent display of force, vitality and colour. Clarke Nuttall has it nicely described when he writes: 'Suddenly the tree is clothed, as it were with a dripping green-gold garment'.[2]' This cloak of gold lame shimmers in the sunlight, a dazzling burst of energy. The brightness of the flowering is akin to Olive and it follows therefore that Hornbeam is for a kind of tiredness or lassitude. It does not happen every spring and the flowers are often subdued or even missing altogether. But every few years (after hot summers it is said) the tree puts on a display which is truly memorable. And then our curiosity is aroused to enquire what strange and exotic species can that be.

Hornbeam grows naturally in the south east of England and not at all in the north; perhaps it is only the weaker southern temperament that calls for Hornbeam's support. The ancient forests to the north east of London were mostly Hornbeam. Here it was coppiced for firewood in previous centuries and was especially prized for its heat and bright flame. The wood takes fire easily. Burning equals transformation of energy; a person in the Hornbeam state needs to transform energy, to galvanize the will into action. The timber is extremely hard. Gerard said'... for in time it waxeth so hard, that the toughness and hardness of it may be rather compared with horn than unto wood; and therefore it was called hornbeam or hardbeam'. The hard, white wood was used in the days before iron and steel for the moving parts of machinery, like the cogs used in a water or wind mill, by wheelwrights, for ploughs and other farm implements. But there is no tree lore associated with the Hornbeam, it has just this beauty in flower and

utility in the timber.

The trunk is smooth, a dull grey-brown but shot through with vertical, silvery lines which waver like light. The picture is one of electrical energy shimmering in the bark. The trunk is rarely circular and has a corrugated or fluted appearance, like braided muscle fibres which bulge beneath a smooth skin. It begins to branch quite low down and each bough branches out in turn. so that the tree has an elegant, forked form; the main boughs are quickly lost in the smaller branches. These twigs are slender and covered by a density of leaf growth. The leaves have a notched edge and are strongly ribbed, an indication of strength and a kind of irritability, like Impatiens (page 43); not that Hornbeam is an irritable emotional state, rather that some irritability and excitement would help to get things moving. The leaves often stay attached through the winter, making Hornbeam useful as a hedge.

Male catkins and female flower

Hornbeam seeds

Hornbeam grows readily in any soil: 'no soil, however wet or dry, comes amiss to it; and undiscouraged by the most ruthless pollarding, it at once starts to grow again'. This shows the powerful intent to get on with life. The life force in Hornbeam is so strong that when two branches touch or cross one another they often grow together and fuse as one.* Hornbeam is a picture of braided strength.

Male and female flowers are found on the same tree. The male catkin is showy and appears a little before the leaves are fully open. The females are very inconspicuous, looking like unfolding leaf-buds pointing downwards at the end of the twigs. When pollinated, small red styles protrude. The seed is a nut which is carried by a three-winged bract which acts as a sail. It flies like a helicopter and may be blown up to a hundred metres from the tree before coming to rest?' As with Clematis (page 46), the fruits stay on the tree well into the winter. There is a parallel here in the need for the Hornbeam person to get down into life, to get deeply involved with the world. The wing of the seed is emblematic of the tendency to remain detached from the earth; downward-pointing flowers, of the need to engage in physical reality.

Hornbeam is one of those remedies which must be taken to fully appreciate the quality of the emotional state. Then the difference can be felt. People become so habituated to the Hornbeam feeling that 'the affairs of everyday seem too much for them to accomplish ...'.[26] Lethargy slowly creeps up. The sudden

flowering of the Hornbeam, like the remedy, brings a sudden access of strength and determination. The gears engage (like the cogs of the mill of the mind) and become active and purposeful once more.

Here, then, are three more remedies made from trees. They share a common feature in that each emotional state has a characteristic reluctance to full involvement in life. Chestnut Bud lives but does not register the significance of what is experienced; this is a mental withdrawal from learning the lessons of life. Larch withdraws from actively participating and so misses the opportunity to learn from involvement, remaining a bystander. Hornbeam, needing to activate the dynamo of wilful engagement in living, uses mental weariness as an excuse for holding back. When these three lessons are learned and integrated into life then the individual soul actively participates in making use of experience to progress and grow.

14 • Finding Fault with the World Around Us

Willow

NORA WEEKS, writing about Edward Bach's experience of the new remedies at this time, said that 'for some days before the discovery of each one he suffered himself from the state of mind for which that particular remedy was required'.' So, having got over his weariness with the help of Hornbeam, he next encountered the bitterness and resentment of Willow. 'It's not fair' is the thought which characterizes this state of mind. What was it that Bach found unfair? Perhaps his ill health, perhaps the rejection of his ideas by the medical establishment, perhaps just the difficulties he experienced in discovering the remedies, we do not know. But Willow he described as being:

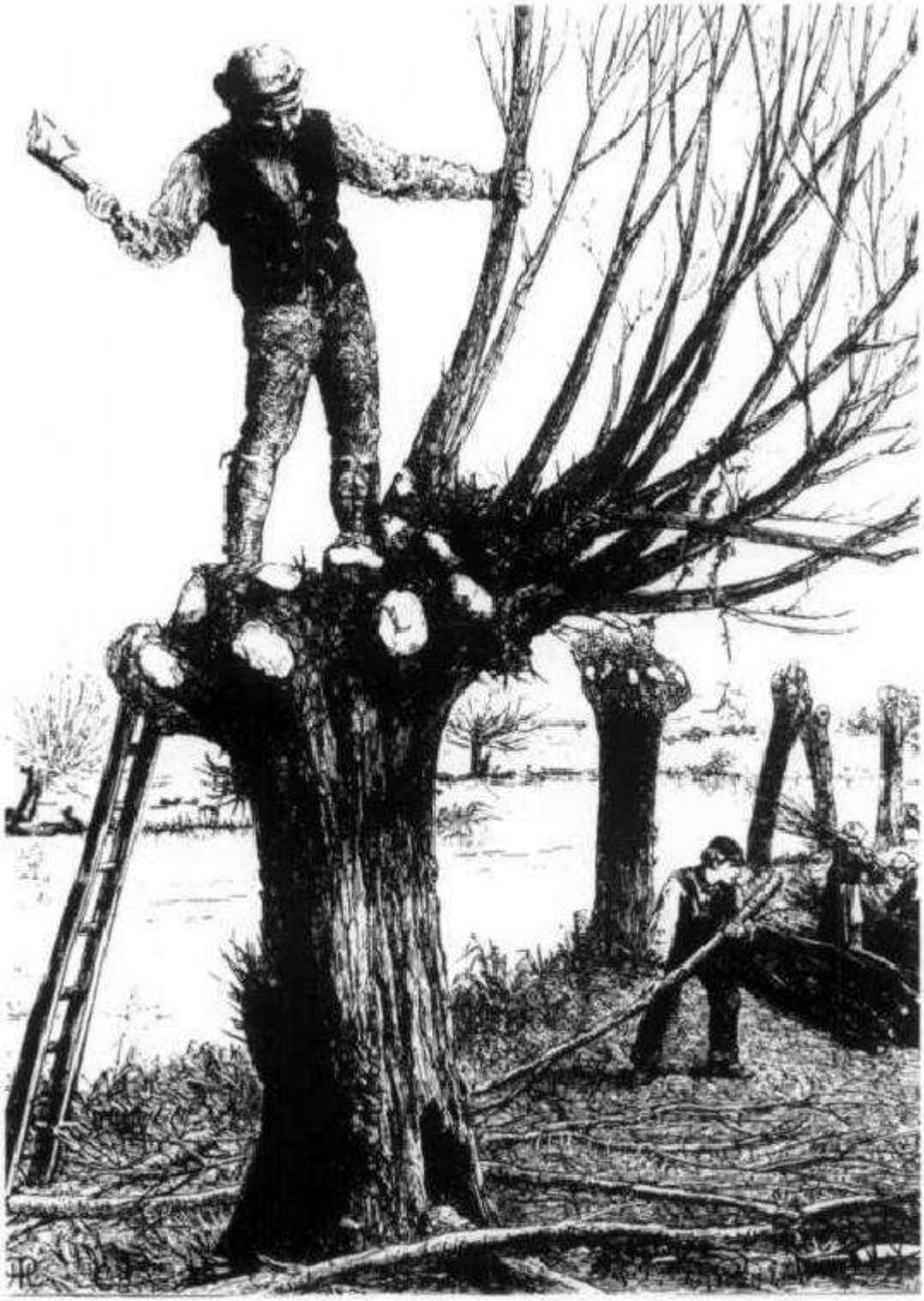
For those who have suffered adversity or misfortune and find these difficult to accept, without complaint or resentment, as they judge lift much by the success which it brings!

This resentment he felt to 'an intensified degree' so that he might then be drawn towards the plant or tree which could counteract it. Just what it felt like for Bach is clear from the description:

They feel that they have not deserved so great a trial, that it was unjust, and they become embittered.

All the boiling remedies describe our responses to the trials of life: that is exactly what they are about. When faced with trauma or misfortune one person will wonder if they have the courage or will to carry on, another feels deep sadness, anger or despair. People who get caught up in the Willow state have more than a fair share of difficulties, or so they feel, and complain of injustice. They respond, said Bach, with less interest and less activity in those things of life which they had previously enjoyed') So they punish themselves. Their energy slows down and turns inward, concentrating like gall to a poison which permeates life so that, inevitably, matters get worse. Willow needs to learn to say 'yes' to life and to work with renewed energy to overcome adversity, no matter how difficult the problem.

There are many types of willow; Bach chose *Salix alba,* subspecies *vitellina* or *Salix vitellina.* The vitellina willow is different because the twigs are a bright egg-yolk yellow (Latin *vitellus,* egg yolk) rather than brown. In other respects *S. vitellina* is like *S. alba,* a tall open tree with narrow lanceolate leaves which are shiny green above and downy olive-grey beneath. The whiter underleaf gives the name 'white' willow. These leaves flutter in the breeze, hence Tennyson's couplet:



Pollarding willow

Willows whiten, aspen quiver,

Little breezes dusk and shiver [The Lady of Shallott] Willows are

often found along the riverbank in damp, low-lying ground. Left to grow they can achieve twenty metres. But more often (especially in years gone by) they are pollarded. Pollarding involves cutting the growing crown out of a tree, reducing the trunk to three metres. This stimulates regrowth in Willow just as it does in Olive (page 175). This was done regularly every few years to harvest a crop of poles for building, fence making and so on; it also supplied a source of firewood. 'It is the sweetest of all our English fuel', remarked Evelyn regarding the scented smoke. He devoted several pages to the willow in his *Silva,* listing forty or more other good uses for the wood including 'plattens for clogs' and 'rafters for hovels'. Willow grows rapidly, up to three metres in a year in ideally wet conditions: It groweth incredibly fast, it being a byeword in this country, that the profit by willows will buy the owner a horse before that by other trees will pay for his saddle'.[6]

So, with money to be made from commercial planting and pollarding of willows the tree had been pressed into service. Like Vine (page 173) it is the very strength and vitality of the species which invites exploitation. And how does the Willow feel about it? Resentful perhaps? Willow's response is to grow back with such vigour that it actually becomes an emblem for the affirmation of life. Ezekiel, the Old Testament visionary, described God's renewal of the Covenant with Israel by saying 'He set it like a willow twig and it sprouted . . .'.[7] Break off a twig or cut off a branch and set it in the earth and it will strike roots and grow; Willow is so responsive to life opportunity. Most trees will not grow from such 'sets' or cuttings and none with such willingness. Logs cut in the winter and stored

will sprout leaves in the spring as if they are still part of the tree. Willow is so alive that it will regrow if it is cut down to ground level.

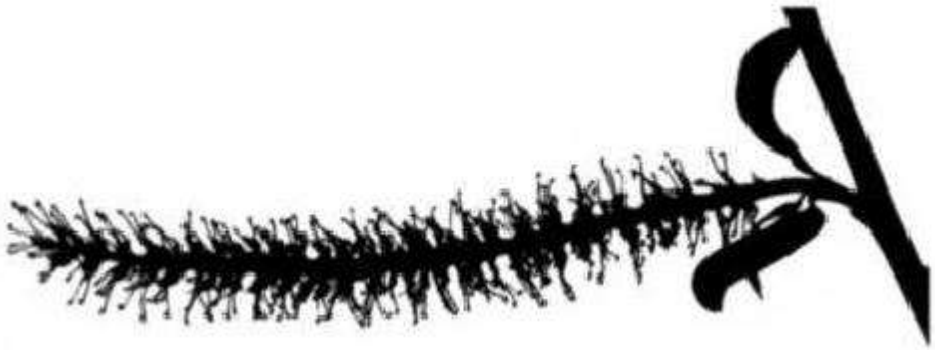
And yet, Willow has also been a traditional symbol for sadness and lamentation:

By the waters of Babylon, there we sat down and wept, when we remembered Zion. On the willows there we hung up our lyres. [Psalm 137]

The Israelites had not deserved such misfortunes (or had they?). 'From that time the willow appears never again to have been associated with feelings of gladness.. .. It was a tree of evil omen, and was employed to make torches carried at funerals!' Maybe the Rev. C. A. Johns missed a point here. The link between Willow and funerals is in the symbol of rebirth after burial in the earth.* This is what happens to the Willow tree; bury a branch and see. The lamentation of the Israelites exiled in Egypt can also be seen as symbolic of the exile that the soul experiences in the physical world. The resentment of the Willow person is based upon a rejection of life as much as on a sense of unfairness. If this appears to be wandering too far into the realms of theology and metaphysical speculation, bear in mind the vital concept that, in the Willow state, the individual has lost belief in the fairness of life. Ezekiel made the point that God (and life) **would** deal justly with the individual. Willow people deny that reality.

There are other, more tangible pointers which illustrate the gesture of the Willow state in the tree. Bach implied that Willow people are concerned with their success in the material world. The way the tree roots deeply into the earth shows this. It has a massive fibrous root system which searches everywhere for water. It is well known that willow roots can block house drains. But this affinity for water shows how Willow people feed upon the emotional drama of complaint and blame. There is an intensity of feeling in all the water plants. Willows grow by rivers and in marshy land. It was this characteristic which gave rise to the idea that it contained help for rheumatics and the aches and pains associated with damp places. In 1763 the Rev. Edmund Stone experimented with willow bark *(S. alba)* thinking the bitterness was reminiscent of Peruvian bark

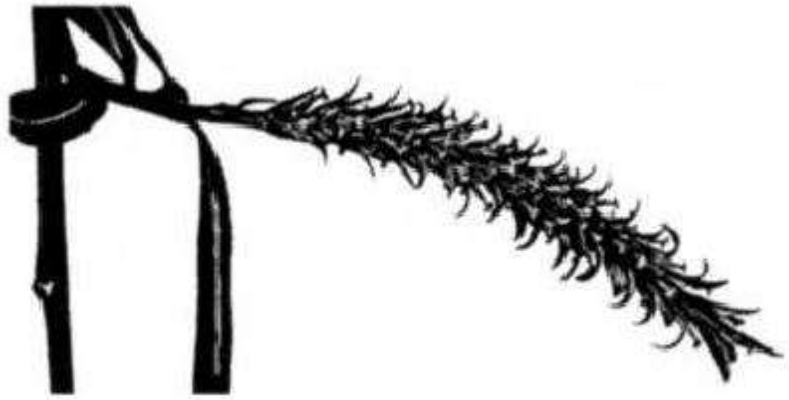
(cinchona), used in preparation of quinine, a treatment for malaria. He claimed some fifty people with rheumatic disorders were helped by willow bark. But his report to the Royal Society was ignored. Perhaps the problem was that 'pious folk belief held that God planted cures where diseases originated'. It was a case of an infant science dismissing the traditional Doctrine of Signatures.* But later research showed that the *salicin* found in Willow was related to our present-day manufactured aspirin, so he was probably right.



Male flowers

The seeds of the Willow are like masses of fine cotton wool floating on the wind: a contrast with the root's desire to become immersed in the physical world. Only if they land on damp soil will they germinate and then, almost immediately. So the cycle of

growing in damp conditions is repeated. Chancellor, in *Handbook of the Bach Flower Remedies, describes* Willow people as wet blankets, spreading gloom and despair. They are sulky, 'believe their prayers are unanswered and their efforts unrewarded... they take without giving'. They would not admit to being happy even if they were happy. 'This is in contrast to the vitality and lust for life seen in the seed, in the networked strength of the bark, in the lanceolate leaf with its serrated edge *(see* Impatiens page 43), and in the greeny-yellow of the flowers with their sweet scent and nectar (see Holly page 240). When in the negative state Willow people become emotionally congested and inflexible. The positive is illustrated in the flexibility of the twigs which bend without breaking (this is what makes this Willow useful for basket-making), in the easy dancing movement of the leaves and branches when the wind blows. A strong wind shows how responsive Willow can be as it allows itself to be shaped by outside forces.



Female flowers

Most of all, however, the contrast between resentment and joy can be seen in the colour of the twigs. Willow stands at the first motivation of a love of life: without that things appear unjust, unkind, depressingly difficult and unfair. This love of life is in the golden, egg-yolk-yellow of the winter wood. In early spring, on a bright, clear day, look at the Willow against a brilliant blue sky: a halo of purple and gold can be seen. This is the positive quality of Willow, shining with life force and strength. It is often thought that the Willow condition is like a lower form of life. But these are people who are qualified and capable, although experiencing a great challenge. Only those who are able to carry much are given the greater load. Accepting that load without complaint, transforming the bitterness into sweet acceptance, makes a real contribution to the evolution of the soul consciousness

of life on earth.

Beech

The complaint about life's circumstances is continued by the next remedy: Beech. This is for intolerance, criticism, fault finding. For those who feel the need to see more good and beauty in all that surrounds them'." Typically, Bach softens the description. But the point is made clearly that this is another remedy for those who look out into the world and do not like what they see. As with Willow people who blame others for their misfortunes so Beech people criticize the world around for its imperfections. They are judgmental. Life for them could be good enough if only they concentrated less upon what needs to be corrected. 'Although much appears to be wrong', said Bach, they need 'to have the ability to see the good growing within'. But this is a remedy for the critic, not the criticized. However valid the criticism may be, the Beech state narrows and restricts joy in life and so narrows and restricts vitality, leading inevitably to ill health.

To find a remedy for this Beech state of mind, Bach needed to be clear about what such people really feel; what leads them to those circumstances? Beech people are not exactly dominant, but they develop an urge to suppress the freedom of other people's self-expression. Again, this is not a soul type but a condition which builds up over time owing to a reactive dislike for something—expressed as 'life does not do what I want so I will criticize everything and everybody to show how wrong it all is'. This finds expression in setting straight the natural tumult of experience, seeking exactness, order and discipline; in the narrow standard of getting it perfect; in a pernickety, fussy attention to cleanliness and detail. All of this expression looks at the external form because the person is internally discontented.

At the end of the year, when Bach had found the last of the Second Nineteen remedies, he organized all thirty-eight into seven

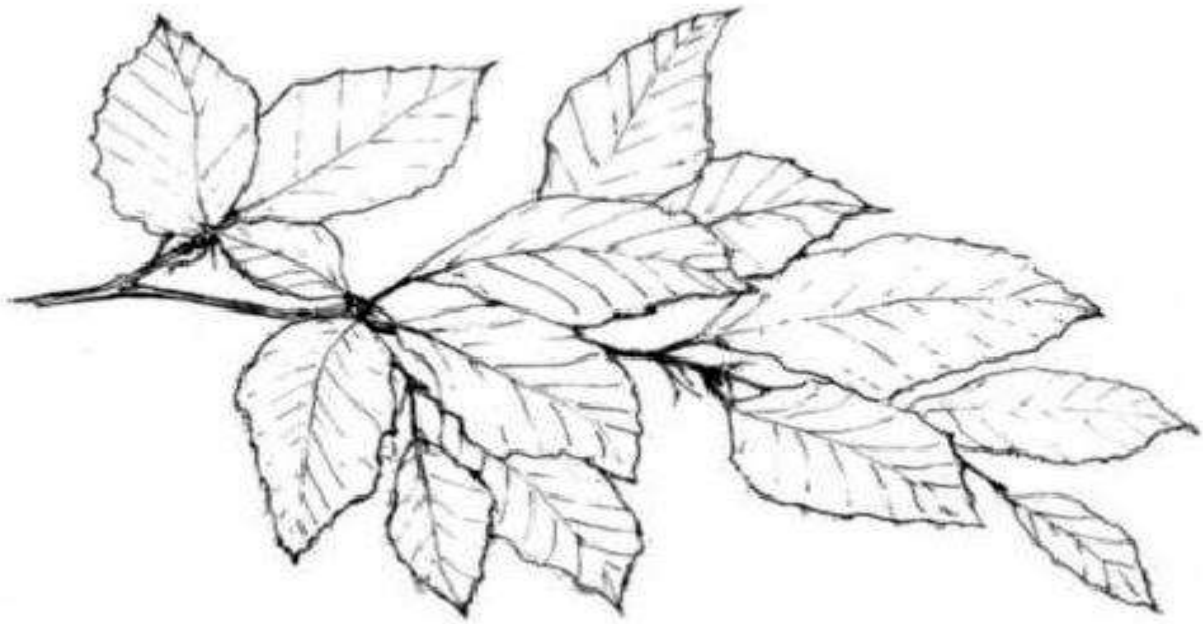
groups. Beech he put into the group for *Over-Care for Welfare of Others,* along with Chicory, Vervain, Vine and Rockwater. All five remedies share the same dissatisfaction with the external circumstances of life and a feeling of superiority towards others. In each case this outlook deflects attention from the real problem: the individuals themselves. The problem for the Beech person is a lack of self-worth. Those who do not value themselves find it hard to value and honour others. Katz and Kaminski in *Flower Essence Repertory* make this point that Beech suffers from

... an inner sense of inferiority and hypersensitivity which is projected on to others. Very often such persons grew up in an environment of criticism and harsh expectation and so they inwardly feel very vulnerable and insecure. However, they learn to cope by condemning others instead of healing themselves."

It may be that Bach had himself grown up with criticism and harsh expectation—his father wanted him to join the family business—so perhaps this was a familiar state of mind. '4 We may imagine him recognizing the problem and once more resorting to his walking meditation in search of the flower, tree or place that would ease the harsh thoughts and bring him back to being:

Tolerant, lenient and understanding of the different ways each individual and all things are working to their own final perfection.

The Wittenham Clumps are a mile and a half north-east of the village of Sotwell. Here a famous group of hilltop Beeches stand guarding an old Iron Age fort. A few miles further away, across the River 'Thames to the east, there are the Beech woods of the Chiltern Hills. In either direction Bach would have come into the characteristic Beech woodland, said by some to be like entering a cathedral, such is the silent calm and peace. To experience fully the tranquility of the Beech tree, stand in a Beech wood. Here the tall, smooth trunks rise like slender pillars to the vaulting leaf canopy. Shafts of light, green from the translucent young leaves, shine into the shaded aisles, which are carpeted with dry brown leaf litter of earlier years. So complete is the high roof's delicate tracery of branches that other plants are starved of light. At the woodland edge, brambles, hollies and hazels may survive, but even here the



low sweeping branches of the Beech trees close out the sun.

In the Beech remedy state a person becomes isolated, lonely and cut off from others. Criticism and intolerance push people away. It is the same with Beech trees. Edward Step remarks it is a powerful competitor with other trees, and if left to fight their own battles unaided, the Beech will be the conqueror'. Evelyn also noted this and commented that in a mixed wood of Oak and Beech, the Beech will dominate and ultimately take over completely. Beech is said to have 'an evil reputation of symbolizing selfish ambition, the ambition of a forest prince in the rivalry of the monarch oak'. The good old English Oak, always popular. Boulger goes on to say 'the well-drained soil in which [Beech] delights is by it drained yet more thoroughly; so that it has a marked power of holding the ground against other species . . . Or, as Mitchell says, 'Beech can grow up under any species but none can grow up under Beech'.

What does this tell us of both the Beech people and the Beech species? Each of the remedies in the Second Nineteen illustrates one of the ways of grappling with the world. Here, personal insecurity leads to other people being pushed away with criticism,

just as Beech trees prevent other species from entering into their

growing space. This dominance, like that of Impatiens (page 43),

suggests a kind of vulnerability—Beech cannot tolerate competition

and the rough play of life and so closes **out** all other species.

Although they appear strong and confident, Beech people are

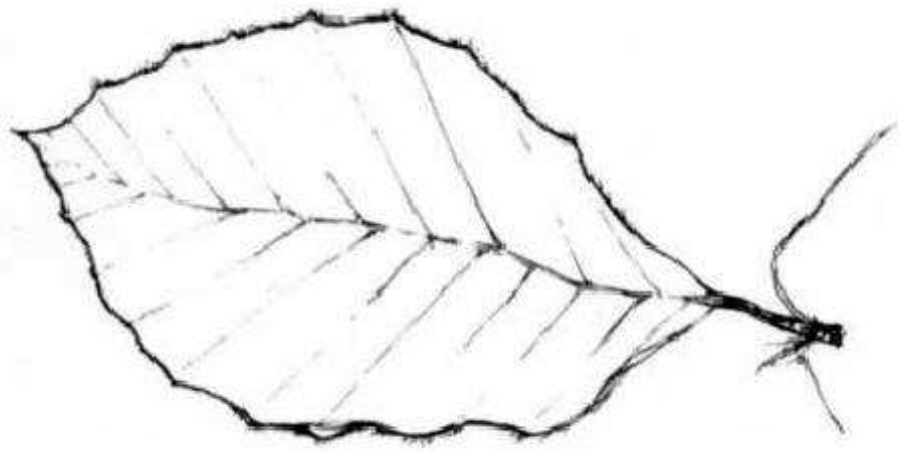
sensitive and vulnerable (shown by the soft hairs that protect the

opening leaves). The Beech tree has a superficial hold upon the

land: the roots spread outwards over the ground (often above the ground) and rarely penetrate to any depth. In a gale a Beech tree may be upturned, and its great, flat plate of roots torn from the earth. It is an uncomfortable picture of a tree which is physically successful yet with a shallow experience of life. In the same way, criticisms by people in a Beech state concern shallow or superficial matters: this is not a profound condition.

Shafts of sunlight in a Beechwood

Beech flowers do not tell us a great deal more. Male and female flowers appear on the same tree. The males hang like dangling ear-rings. The females appear at the growing tip of the branch like a little nest of wiry spikes, unfriendly. The Beech forms a nut inside a barbed casing. This is nourishing, though nothing like as useful as the acorn. Therefore, we might suppose, there is a value to life in the Beech condition, and some good comes from criticism. But it is not of great value in the scheme of things.



The leaves are beautiful ly pleated, opening like a perfect parasol or fan, geometri cally

balanced; further evidence of the push to perfection. The leaf buds are long and thin, like an accusing, pointing finger. The bark of the tree is smooth, showing only the occasional wrinkle like a slipping stocking. If we are looking for the positive, tolerant, understanding aspect of the remedy it is not easy to see it in the detail of the tree. Rather, Beech pushes us to the extreme of experience so that we react from the negative to the positive, like the light and dark within the Beech wood.

15 • What Has Got Into You?

Crab Apple

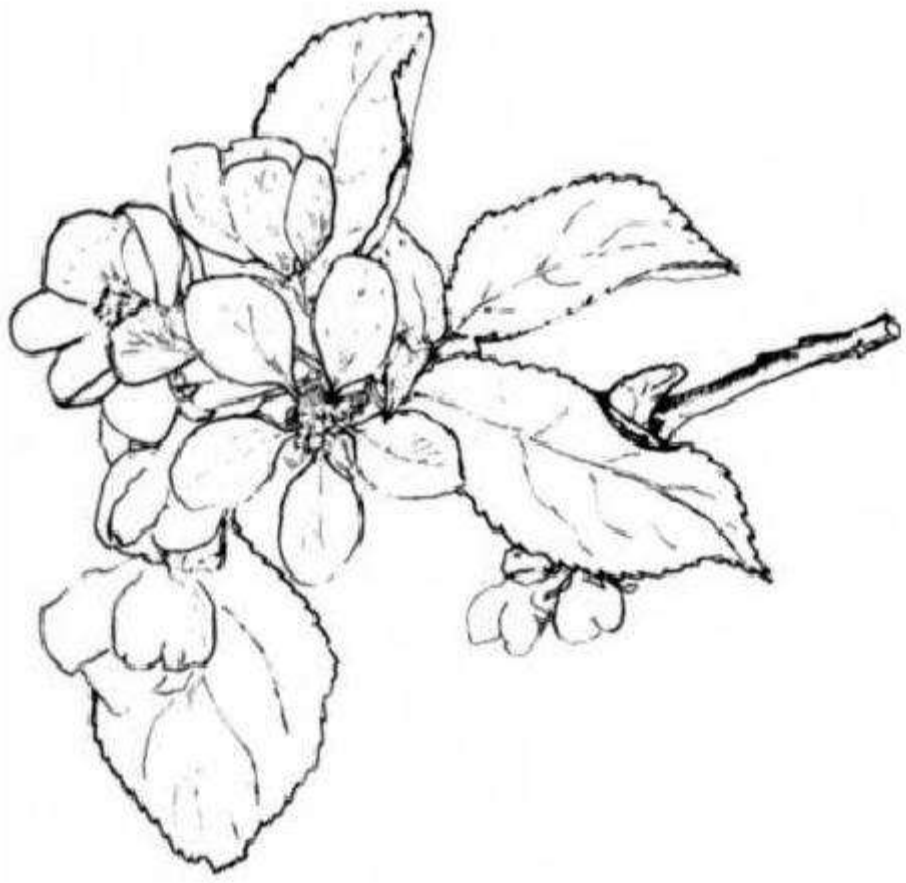
FOLLOWING CLOSELY UPON BEECH comes Crab Apple. Here the finger-pointing and judgmental attitude of Beech is turned back upon us, not in order to question something fundamental but as we worry about seemingly superficial aspects of our health. In the Crab Apple state 'often it is something of apparently little importance,' said Bach.' People have a feeling 'as if they had something not quite clean about themselves? 'There is a sense that something is wrong and, searching for an explanation, people fix upon a trivial concern, like the small skin blemish which is most easily seen. The condition of the skin is an expression of overall health—skin disease is regarded as analogous with disease of other organs and bodily functions—so it stands to reason that a small spot on the nose is a token of wider internal disorder. But it can be difficult to know what signals what problem. So a sense of proportion can be lost here. That is one aspect of Crab Apple.

Secondly, concern about these superficial problems may become a fixation. Bach commented that some people suffer from a 'more serious disease which is almost disregarded compared to the

one thing on which they concentrate . . . which seems so essential to them that it should be cured'. A third factor in the remedy description is a kind of despondency which Bach said can go with Crab Apple, if treatment fails. Furthermore, he spoke of this as 'the remedy of cleansing'—this is a complex remedy which describes several conditions simultaneously:

Being a cleanser, this remedy purifies wounds if the patient has reason to believe that some poison has entered which must be drawn out)

So Crab Apple also operates directly at a physical/ medical level. More than any other of the remedies, perhaps. But this cleansing may be needed at a more subtle level, not just for the physical body. Non-physical toxins may have entered into us: emotional poisons, ideas which shadow the clarity of the mind, experiences with a residual sense of being contaminated, infected or defiled. Then Crab Apple helps by bringing cleansing purity of light into the darkening places where the wounds are.



The Crab Apple remedy is prepared from the flowers of the wild apple tree, *Malus sylvestris.* As with Cherry Plum (page 186) these blossoms are a blaze of sweetness and light. That is what makes the

essence, the purity of the light, the tender softness of the petals with their pink glow of vitality, opening to the golden heart of the stamens, a soft purifying fire. That is it.

The tree is small and variable in form with a knarled and crooked trunk and a head of dense, interlacing branches. It is shallow rooted, just like Beech (page 224), which denotes the superficiality, and a tendency to be blown over by the wind or pulled over by the attraction of water lines.* The bark is furrowed, irregular, wrinkled and liable to flake—a sign of the diffused and erratic energy in the skin. Noticeably, the bark is frequently covered with moss and lichens. Crab Apple is the chief habitat for mistletoe *(Viscum album)* a parasite which draws nourishment from the sapwood by rooting in through the bark, like a cancer. Bach's own cancer has already been noted. Does this point back to his 'more serious disease which is almost disregarded compared to the one thing on which they concentrate'? The fruit is, of course, the crab itself, green, sharp to taste and a poor eating apple compared to the fat, juicy flesh of domestic ones. But the wild crab is stronger. The little apples will last right through the winter without rotting. The apple is the emblem of health, cleansing and purity, as well as knowledge. The seeds are the small pips found in the core, inside the five-pointed star which forms from the five-petalled flower; a symbol of time and eternity. Yet there is little material here to explain Bach's choice of Crab Apple as a remedy. His selection was informed by what countered the mood of that moment: an empirical experience.

Crab Apple is one of the most popular of the Bach flower remedies (page 284). Someone unwell feels infected, invaded, as if some poison or foreign entity has taken over the body and corrupted the normal programme of living. A virus does this and so does a cancer. In Bach's writings the words clean, cleanliness, cleanse, pure and purify occur repeatedly as he describes first the need for intestinal cleanliness and its relation to diet,[6] then the cleaning power of his nosodes, 'the spiritual power that cleanses mind and body, and heals', and later the use of clean, pure water

for the remedies and 'the clean pure beautiful agents of Nature'. It is not that Bach was obsessed by cleanliness, rather that he realized illness of any kind calls for purification. Crab Apple is the remedy of purification. Purification can range from the simplest act of washing our hands before eating to the most complex rituals of isolation, sacrifice and initiation.* The white apple blossom is the purifying light which acts within the Crab Apple remedy.

If Crab Apple involves the sense that 'some poison has entered which must be drawn out',") it is easy to see how it related to Bach's state of health at the time. His friend Nora was clearly appalled by what she saw him going through and described how he needed superhuman courage to survive." His body was 'completely covered' with a rash during the hottest part of the summer. During the year his hair had fallen out, he had leg ulcers and failing eyesight. At one point, she tells us, he was haemorrhaging, presumably bleeding from the bowel, and this only stopped when he found the next remedy. Not a pretty tale. Furthermore, according to Nora," his sensitivity at this time had grown to the point where he was aware of the illness of a patient before they arrived at the house for a consultation. On occasion, he even experienced the symptoms of their illness in his own body a couple of hours before their arrival. This kind of openness to metaphysical experiences—the resonance of the disease and suffering of others—was an extension of the resonance of mental states Bach had experienced when searching for remedies. But it is not healthy and may indicate too great an openness and susceptibility to outside influences.

Out of these experiences, Bach contrived a description of the next remedy state: Walnut. Like Crab Apple, this contains the idea that something has entered the person which is causing damage and distortion. Having cleared the poison out of the system, Walnut is there to close the door and make sure that it does not return. 'This remedy,' he said, 'gives constancy and protection from outside influences'. Outside influences abound—advertising, electro-magnetic signals, peer pressure or psychic attack. The intent here was to protect the person and so maintain control of the soul's purpose. Bach's purpose at this time was to find these new remedies. So the prompt for Walnut was that something was

interfering in his work.

Walnut

For those who have definite ideals and ambitions in life and are fulfilling them, but on rare occasions are tempted to be led away from their own ideas, aims and work by the enthusiasm, convictions or strong opinions of others.

Dr Bach himself can be recognized in the phrasing 'definite ideals and ambitions in life' it carries an echo of the Elm description, 'doing good work and following their calling in life'. The temptation to be led away from his own ideas must have come from some specific experience. It is as though he came under the influence of a Vervain type (page 105), someone convinced they knew better. But it could equally be that he was experiencing a more subtle form of psychic interference—ideas being put into his mind which subverted his own mental processes. The action of the Walnut remedy rebuilt the integrity of Bach's thinking so that he was once again clear about his path and direction.*

The link between Walnut and the mind is generally made because the nut itself looks like a brain. Not a new thought, but one expressed clearly by William Cole in 1657:

Wall-nuts have the perfect Signature

of the Head: the outer husk or green covering, representing the Pericranium or outward skin of the skull whereupon the hair groweth.... The kernel hath the very figure of the Brain and therefore it is very profitable for the Brain...

The same thought was expressed in poetry by Abraham Cowley, at about the same time:

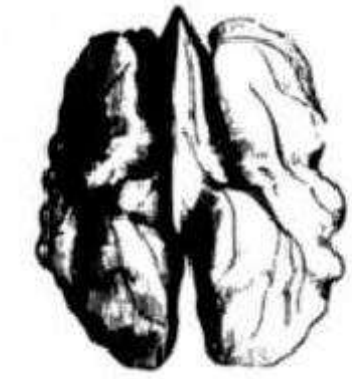
Nor can this head-like nut, shaped like the brain

Within, be said by chance that form to gain,

*Or Caryon called by learned Greeks in vain;**

For membranes soft as silk her kernel bind,
Whereof the inmost is of tenderest kind,
Like those which on the brain of man we find.
All which are in a seam joined shell enclosed,
Which of this brain the skull might be supposed.

According to the Doctrine of Signaturest the form of the nut pointed to its value as a medicine for the brain. These days the idea would not be taken literally. But it is not the physical medication that is sought, rather the idea that lies behind the form: what Walnut represents.



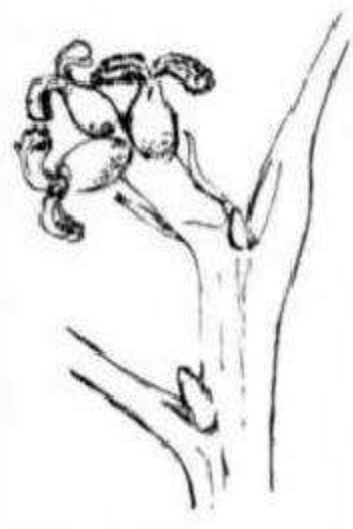
The English walnut tree, *Juglans regia,* is not a native but has probably been grown in Britain since the time of the Romans. It came originally from Persia (the modern Iran) and northern India. It was always grown more extensively on

the Continent and its Latin name gives it prominence: *regia* as in regal and *Juglans* as for 'Jovis glans' or Jupiter's nut. In the Golden Age mortals might eat acorns, apparently, while the gods ate walnuts. The tree is also linked to the Greek goddess Artemis (Roman, Diana), who 'is goddess of the wild, virgin nature, all the inviolable places where humans dare not enter'. She is a goddess of the wilderness. Baring and Cashford in *The Myth of the Goddess* make the revealing comment that 'there was a purity, an uncompromising autonomy about Artemis that related the uncharted empty spaces in nature to the solitude required by every human being to discover a single identity'. This has a strong echo of the Walnut state. Artemis is also the virgin huntress, the ruler of childbirth, unmarried girls and transition to motherhood. At weddings in Rome, young boys scrambled after walnuts thrown by the bridegroom 'as a sign that he had laid aside childish amusements', according to some authorities. But it was more likely that this was a ritual gift to propitiate the goddess for the loss of one of her maidens. So in classical tradition at least, Walnut is linked to rites of passage and the developmental stages in human society.

Such ideas derived directly from what people observed of nature and the character of the Walnut tree. The female flowers have a striking resemblance to the womb: hence the connection with Artemis. The male flower is a large pendulous catkin, like the penis. So the signature here is rather explicit and walnuts have therefore been regarded as a 'symbol of fecundity'. To make the Walnut mother essence for a Bach remedy only the female flowers are used which leans away from the sexual allusion and looks more to the image of the womb as a protected environment, a place for growth, development and the coming into being for a new life. Bach picked up on this connection to new life in his further comments:

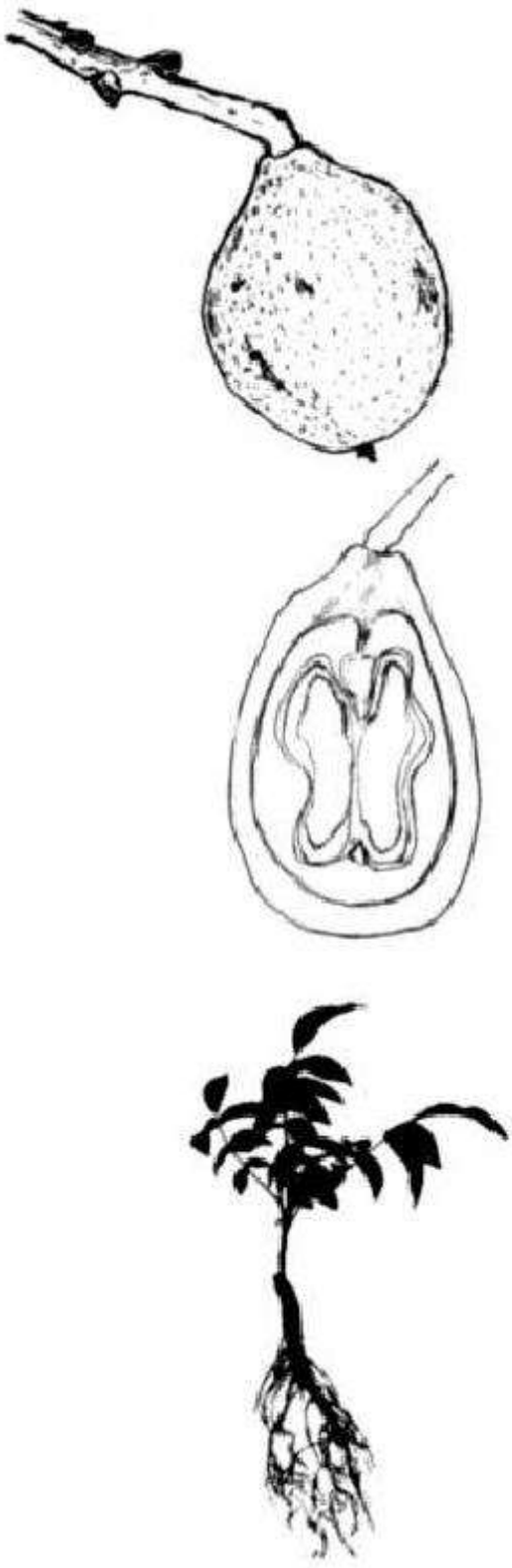
Walnut is the Remedy of advancing stages, teething, puberty, change of lift. For the big decisions made during lift such as change of religion, change of occupation, change of country. The Remedy for those who have decided to take a great step forward in lift, to break old conventions, to leave old limits and restrictions and start on a new way.

Every new life and every stage on the path of life can be a 'great step forward' and needs protection. At times of change the structure of our energy patterns is loosened to accommodate the new situation; without that loosening people cannot change. But this leaves them more open to interference and the intrusion of distorting forces which may throw them off course. Walnut then acts as a shield, a defensive barrier within which it is safe to assemble the new pattern of identity.



Female Walnut flowers

The female flowers grow in the nil of the leaves, often two or three together. They appear as a swollen, green bud, flask-shaped, with two small feathery horns or curving green tongues which grow out from the ovary. These are the stigmas awaiting windblown pollen from the male catkins. When pollinated they blush, coral-pink. This subtle colour change takes place with several flowers (for instance White Chestnut and Cherry Plum, pages 252 and 187). It is a chemical messenger signalling the internal transition. The green fruit swells and internally membranes separate out the different parts which become the kernel of the



nut, its skin, the hard shell and the fleshy outer layer. While the nut is forming the inside is like a clear jelly within a wrinkled white skin.

The outer flesh looks like a large unripe plum, 'only the pleasant, alluring flesh of the plum is here represented by a thick, green rind beset with bitter tannin glands which repel with acerbity all attempt to interfere with it'. No bird, insect or animal will penetrate this 'epicarp', so the young are allowed to grow, protected. When the fruit is ripe it will usually fall with the epicarp intact. This covers the hardened shell of the nut within, which in turn is protecting the now tasty kernel. Crows do find ways to break **in** but more accessible fruit is usually available. Squirrels bury the fruit whole, allowing the bitter outer coat to decay in the ground!' Humans harvest walnuts. Juices in the husk stain the hands of those who pickle them and this juice used to be extracted to make a dye. Dr Bach himself used Walnut stain on the furniture he made for *Mount Vernon* and *Wellsprings,* the two houses in Sotwell. Such a dye penetrates the wood and permanently changes its appearance.

When the nut germinates it quickly puts down one thickened root, like a slim carrot, with many smaller fibrous roots attached. This swollen taproot is characteristic and explains why it is difficult to transplant walnuts trees after they are one or two years old. The seedling tree remains attached to the old shell for some time, continuing to take nourishment from the kernel of the nut. There is a tenacity here, holding to the past while yet growing strongly with a deep-diving intent to anchor in the physical world. With other plants, like Chicory (page an), the deep root is indicative of an association with the past. With Walnut the link to the past is understood differently, earning the remedy the name of 'the link breaker', or 'spell breaker'.

When the spring leaves first open they are purple-bronze in colour, powdered with gold spots. They look very exotic. The colouring results from the presence of tannins and volatile oils, which have a strong and characteristic odour. This deters all animals which might otherwise eat the fresh young shoots: Mrs Grieve notes that 'no insect will touch the leaves')` This smell is rather like that of Impatiens (page 43), another plant which keeps animals away to avoid molestation. It is said Walnut roots contain the same chemical, and that it poisons other plants. The Walnut remedy takes from all this a quality of isolation and deterrence. In summer the leaves are still scented and oils vaporize in the warm sun. Although they are tougher and less attractive to eat they maintain a shield against predators. By then they have formed a dense shade acting as a barrier to other species. Parkinson remarks: '. . . by reason of his great spreading armes it taketh up a great deale of roome, his shadow reaching farre, so that scarcely any thing can well grow near it.';' This antagonism contrasts with the Oak (page 154) which is so receptive and responsive to other species. Walnut offers isolation where an individual may develop alone without the influence of outside forces.

When young, Walnut bark is smooth and green, almost like Beech (page 226). But as the tree ages a pattern of shallow fissures develops giving the appearance of flat ribboning which curves up the trunk and branches. There is no great significance in this but it

shows how the Walnut tree changes with age. Bark protects a tree, and when smooth it suggests a sealed coating of energy which has little exchange with outside forces. Older bark shows how the structure has developed—in this case with a more open network of energy which still protects and strengthens the tree.

Walnuts were usually planted deliberately to harvest the nuts; at least, that used to be the case. Writing in 1946, A. L. Howard laments that 'less and less interest has been taken either in the trees or their fruit, and only in a very few cases is any care and attention practised today'; far truer now than then. Trees can still be seen in country areas like Herefordshire. They stand sentinel, by a farm gate or in the hedge behind a cottage, a welcome sight when it is known how helpful their protective influence can be. Like Elms (page 194) they represent a link between man and the land. Evelyn wrote of the traditional husbandry in France and Germany, where it was the invariable practice to replant and replace old, decayed walnut trees. No young farmer might marry until he had planted his quota of these trees. [34] Today it might be difficult to find ten young men, married or not, who have tasted a home-pickled walnut this year, let alone planted a walnut tree. Such is the demise of our rural economy.

It is significant that Dr Bach put both Walnut and Holly under a heading *Over-Sensitive to Influences and Ideas* (page 281); they are next to each other in the text of *The Twelve Healers & Other Remedies;"* they flower at the same time. We must assume that, no matter what threatened Edward Bach at this time, the preparation of the Walnut remedy served to protect him, making him less sensitive to outside influences and ideas. But what if the influences were no longer external but had come from within? The next remedy would need to deal with the effects of such an invasion: Holly. This is the remedy 'for those who are sometimes attacked . . .'. That is how the description begins. Suppose the attack had got past the guards and a negative pattern of interference had actually taken up residence?

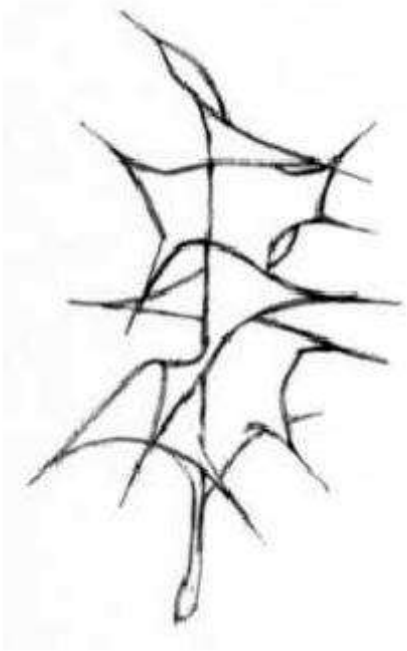
Holly

The Holly state is very serious, for it describes all kinds of strongly negative emotions which not only burn within a person but express themselves in destructive, even violent behaviour. It is for `jealousy, envy, revenge, suspicion, the different forms of vexation'. Vexation is a nicely old-fashioned word, but here it does not mean a trifling ill humour but a kind of agitation, intensely malicious. More particularly, it means the experience of being shaken by violent feelings (Latin *vexare,* to shake). Everyone knows what it feels like to be shaken by our own anger or to be shaken by the anger of others. This might well be the most important of the Thirty-eight Bach remedies, since it is for hatred and rage. But Bach put it another way, saying it was a protection `from everything that is not Universal Love'. He was attempting to avoid the negative characterization of emotions which grow larger the more they are concentrated on. Anger is not wrong in itself, but the lack of love can cause problems. Hatred results from the absence of love; the two are mutually exclusive. Holly is for any persistent negative emotion which violates the sanctity of life.

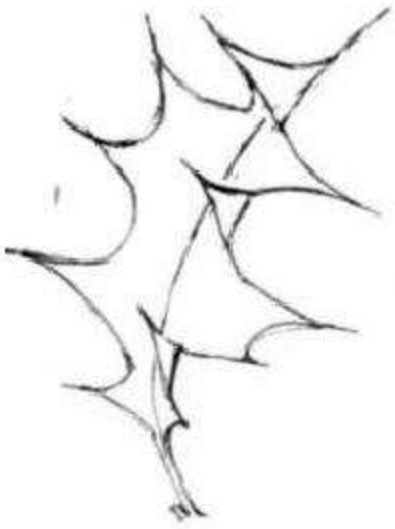
To understand why Dr Bach chose Holly as a remedy, it is necessary to understand what happens when a person gets jealous or in a rage.* Contemporary neuroscience reckons that emotions are complicated collections of chemical and neural responses' leading to 'circumstances advantageous to the organism'. Yet while there may be occasions when anger is useful and appropriate it is essentially a negative reaction to life circumstances. It is not a 'part of homeostatic regulation', bringing balance to the organism or 'survival-oriented behaviour'—at least as far as Bach remedies are concerned. Anger is a reaction to the invasion of an individual's sense of self; this may mean a breach of integrity, of standards of

behaviour, a reaction to the power of something far stronger, a threat to the sense of self-control. Invaded (by physical or non-physical inter ference) a person may react with outrage. To that extent it is a natural and appropriate response. But the problem arises when outrage becomes habitual. Someone who is habitually angry must experience an habitual stimulus. The invasion or attack which breaches the sense of self has so broken down the natural defences that a part of the being is taken over, it has become occupied territory. Anger then is the reaction to a foreign pattern of activity *within* the boundaries of the self. Far from indicating that homeostasis is at work, it indicates that homeostasis has failed.

This is an important concept, since invasive diseases like cancer may be related to anger and the Holly condition.



Holly, *Ilex aquefolium,* is well known for its prickly, evergreen leaves and red berries making it so attractive in winter. It is generally a small tree, slow growing and, unusually, tolerant of shade. While it also grows in the open, this habit of sheltering beneath other trees explains much about Holly and why it was chosen for the remedy. Johns says, 'the Divine Power which fixed its rate of growth ordained at the same time that it should thrive under the shade of its lofty companions. Hence we frequently see it deepening the gloom of a forest, where it is rarely visited by even a few straggling sunbeams . . .'[3].[43] A tree or plant which grows in the shade requires a dark green leaf to absorb as much light as is available.* This must be significant. Holly needs light; the Holly remedy brings the light of love into the



darkness of negativity.

The leaves have an average of fifteen prickles each," arranged both sides of a strong central spine. These prickles force leaves, which would otherwise be flat, to angle into repeatedly changing curves. Each leaf is then set so that maximum light is received whichever direction it comes from. At the same time, any unabsorbed light is reflected by the shiny, waxy surface. It bounces back into the thick of the bush so that other leaves may absorb it in turn. The foliage is very dense, with branches growing in all directions, so the structure of the tree is often hard to detect. There may be several small trunks with smooth white-grey bark, which has the effect of bringing light into the middle of the tree, just where it is darkest. Young shoots grow vertically from the base of the tree, their bark green for photosynthesis. All this presents a strongly black and white appearance.

Much is made of the fact that Holly has these prickly leaves: it is said to be a form of protection to deter grazing cattle or deer. But if it is a defensive measure, why does Holly have smooth-edged leaves at the top and outer edges of older trees? Because cattle cannot reach so high? (No giraffes in Europe.) That may be true, but the leaves at the top of a full-grown tree have all the light they need—that is why they have fewer prickles and the leaves are flat. Because some commentators force the issue of defensive or competitive behaviour among plants and animals, Holly is seen as hostile, with the leaves evolving a spiky form. As with the Holly remedy state it is important not to concentrate solely on the negative (anger, jealousy, hatred or greed) but to look for the positive stance, the light in the darkness.

The spiny form of the Holly leaf acts to interlock one branch or shoot with another and thereby one tree with another. This forms a supportive matrix (as with the Gorse, page 148) which helps younger trees to resist movement by the wind. A careful reading of Darwin shows that he was well aware that spines, prickles and hooks serve to assist in plant growth rather than plant defence. Holly trees cannot tolerate movement at their roots (anger shakes

the root of our security). When exposed to wind a juvenile, solitary tree will often die back with silvery, dead wood among the bright green new shoots. So this habit of linking arms, as it were, brings support and strength to the group: one reason why Holly is such a good hedging plant.

There is a natural tendency for Hollies to grow together. The seeds are often passed by roosting birds after they have eaten the berries. Each berry has three or four seeds so they are 'planted' in groups. Holly is one of the few trees, therefore, to grow in the understorey of beech woods where pigeons may settle for the nigh t. The small seedling Holly has a long tapering root and in the first years the leaves are at their most curved, contorting themselves in an attempt to find both light and support. Growing in leaf-litter or thin grass at the foot of a full-grown tree or within a hedge, the young Holly will encounter difficulty because of the lack of light and moisture. Only great determination will win through. But Holly can sustain itself, even growing in among the roots of a full-sized oak tree. This shows more of the positive determination which enables the Holly state to be overcome.

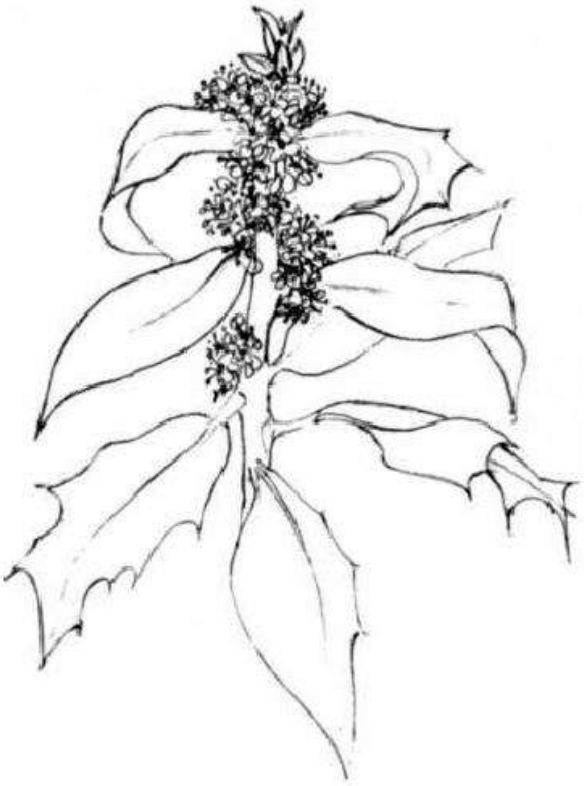
The spines on the leaves *(aquifolium* means needle-leaves) are a sharp reminder of the need to reawaken love within. While the negative energy of the Holly state is turned outwards—we are angry with someone rather than with ourselves, we are jealous or envious of others—it is necessary to internalize and find the cause of the problem. The sharp prick of Holly's needle-leaves is painful but stimulates the life force, just as it does with Gorse (page 147). Gorse provides a kick into action. With Holly it is a stab to the heart, homoeopathic one might say.

Extraordinary as it may seem, Holly trees were once pollarded (see Willow, pages 218-9) and the branches taken for fodder. They needed to be crushed in a chaff-cutter, but like Gorse, they were nourishing for stock. Where stands of Holly grew for such a purpose they were called 'hollins'. `One well-defined group is in the Olchon valley in Herefordshire, where the gnarled pollards stand in a landscape of Celtic fields and ancient stones'. In this area the Holly thrives and it is here that I have most often made the mother essence for the remedy. These trees may form a simple 'hollin' or

perhaps a sacred grove. There is something very unusual about the place. There are no pre-Christian records which might explain the history. But it is likely that agrarian, pagan rituals were enacted which involved Holly as the winter king. This is remembered in the *Holly-Tree Carol:*

Of all the trees that are in the wood, The holly bears the crown.

Such a folk memory was recorded in *The Romance of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight.* To quote Robert Graves: 'The Green Knight is an immortal giant whose club is a holly-bush. He and Sir Gawain, who appears in the Irish version as Cuchulain, a typical Hercules, make a compact to behead one another at alternate New Years—meaning midsummer and midwinter'. Sir Gawain represents the sacrificed oak king. This is complex mythology but it was adopted and adapted by early Christians" much as was the worship of wells and springs (see Rockwater, page 160. Jesus then became the sacrificed god-king; His crown of thorns, a holly wreath; the four-petalled white flowers a symbol of His purity and the cross; the red berries the drops of His blood. The English name Holly then becomes holy.



Holly in flower

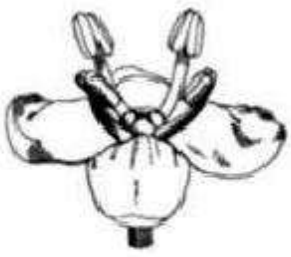
How much does this play into the Holly remedy and perception of the Holly state from Bach's point of view? He was often overtly Christian in his writing. Of Beech he said that at its best it was an example of perfect tolerance:

It was Christ allowing the soldiers to place the crown of thorns on His head, to pierce His hands and feet with nails without His having one harsh thought. Instead He pleaded on their behalf 'Father forgive them for they know not what they do.

This would actually be better applied to Holly. Perfect tolerance is the acceptance of the world's anger and contempt, welcoming in negativity but overcoming it with love. Holly has become the tree of Christ's love, the tree for Christmas." We bring Holly branches into our homes (but only for the days until Twelfth Night) in memory of the renewal which comes after the darkest day of the winter solstice and the renewal of the light of the world. It is still considered to be bad luck to cut down a Holly and when mechanical flails trim the hedges in Herefordshire, Holly trees are always left to grow—often the odd Oak as well.

Female flower

The Holly remedy is made from the flowers by the boiling method. Weeks said we can use the female and/or the male flowers. These grow on different trees (the reason why not every Holly bears a berry). The two types of flower are rather similar in construction and appearance: clusters of white around the neck of the twigs, contrasting with the dark leaves. The obvious difference is the female ovary which appears as a small green dome surmounted by four stigmas in the form of a disk. The female flower also has false (vestigial) stamens which are not effective in pollination, just as the males have a vestigial ovary. Apparently this is a tree still differentiating its male and female qualities. The female flower buds develop during spring, leading straight to flowering in May, while the male buds develop during the previous summer. It is almost as though it would flower twice in the one year. Similarly, for an unknown reason, berries sometimes remain on the tree, neglected by birds, not just through the winter but on into the following summer. Flower buds in the autumn, with berries at the same time as the blossom, suggests a sustained and perennial energy within the tree, again like Gorse. Love, like hope, springs eternal; it is always there in potential. Holly is sweet-scented and its flowers produce abundant nectar, whose sweetness brings a throng of bees.



Male flower

One other point about Holly concerns colour: of the leaves, the bark and the berries. Red and green are complementary colours. An easy way to see this is to use a table lamp with a green shade. It will cast a green shadow on to the wall, but place your hand so that the green light falls on it and a red shadow will appear. Conversely, a green shadow will be cast by red light. The complementary colour is stimulated as the light shines into darkness. This effect applies to shadows falling within all green-leafed trees. But the red of the holly berry is beautifully equivalent to the dark green of the leaves. The young shoots, which are green, turn to silver-grey and when mature carry a shading of red. Now, the colour of anger is red, there is no doubt, just as green is the colour of envy or jealousy. These are colours seen in the aura. But equally red is for animation and green for balance and harmony. So Holly as a remedy acts on the point of choice. The energy can be negative or positive according to the intention of the individual; this follows the direction of the soul. If an individual's freedom has been usurped by an outside pattern of activity it will be more difficult for the choice to be made and sustained. We will meet the negativity and be confused as to the process involved.

The Holly remedy, said Bach, may be given when other remedies fail to have the desired effect, or if the prescriber feels too many different remedies are indicated. This is one of the so-called `catalysts' which Bach recommended—Holly for the active and intense person, while Wild Oat is for the weak and despondent type. Holly was chosen because of this quality of light and dark, positive and negative. Like Beech it prompts the individual to stand forward, to step into the light. Here all may be clearly revealed and seen for what it is.

16 • The Coming of the Light

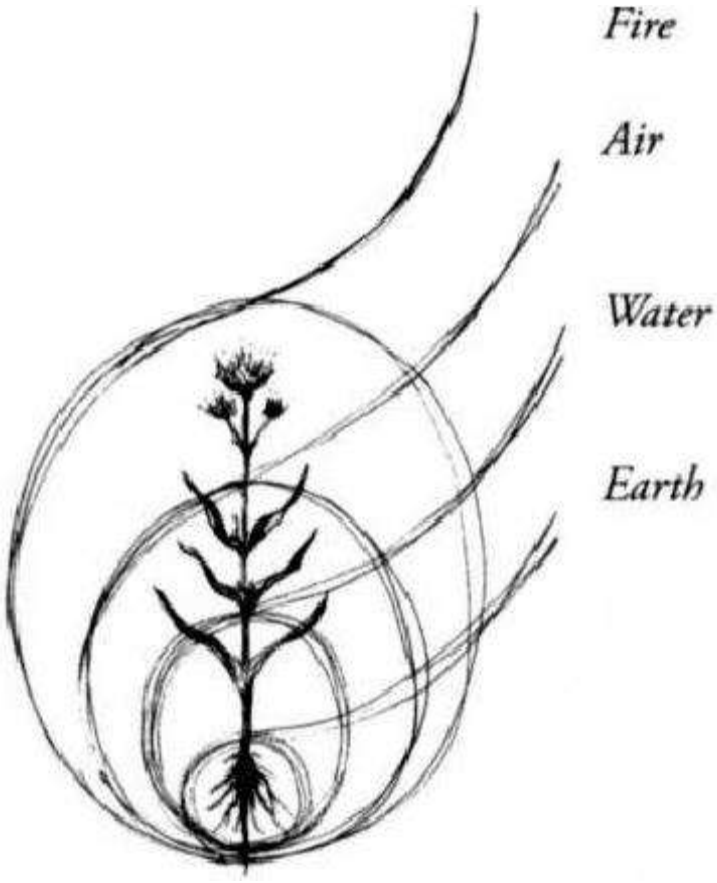
IT IS APPARENT THAT DR BACH'S FLOWER REMEDIES are centrally concerned with bringing light to the light body. Cherry Plum is about light; Crab Apple is about light; Holly is about light. Many of the flower remedy plants can only be described effectively in terms of a pattern of light. While allopathic medicine looks for chemical action, and homoeopathy turns on like curing like, flower essence therapy talks of vibration, resonance or pattern of energy.

But these things—pattern, resonance or energy—end up describing the essential qualities of light.

We know that light is only a narrow band in the electro-magnetic spectrum. Visible light lies in the middle of the wider range of waves, from x-rays, through ultraviolet to infrared, microwave and radio waves. Only when they reach our planetary system and meet physical matter, first in the atmosphere and then on land, do these waves illuminate an object. Light does not exist in outer space. Light waves which do not contact a physical body pass by, travelling on into the darkness of space: the moon appears in a dark night sky. Other electromagnetic frequencies are just as invisible and unrecognized, unless there is a suitable receiver for the signal. Radio waves are all around, but we are ignorant of their content until we 'tune in' to the appropriate waveband and then hear the broadcast. In the same way, physical bodies are the aerials or satellite dishes to pick up the electromagnetic waves in the visible spectrum: light.

No great surprise in this. Green plants have physical bodies and their most essential function is to receive and utilize electromagnetic waves in the visible spectrum (light). Through the process of photosynthesis green plants are able to collect radiant energy from the sun and give it physical form. Light energy is thus transformed into chemical energy. The key to this process is chlorophyll* which allows air, water and minerals to be transformed into sugars and the material of plant life. These sugars, in varying forms, are the building blocks of the food chain as roots and leaves, fruit and *seeds* are eaten by humans and animals. So photosynthesis, by transforming the light of the sun, is the fundamental process which sustains life on earth.

Bach spoke of how the sun method (page 61) involved the four elements—earth, air, fire and water.' This thought has wider application in the context of plant life. The fire element is the light which brings energy from the sun. Air is represented by oxygen and carbon dioxide, the gases of photosynthesis. Water is also part of the chemical equation, but principally the medium circulating sugars within the leaves, stems and root of the plant. Earth is in the plant root, just as the root is in the earth. These four elements



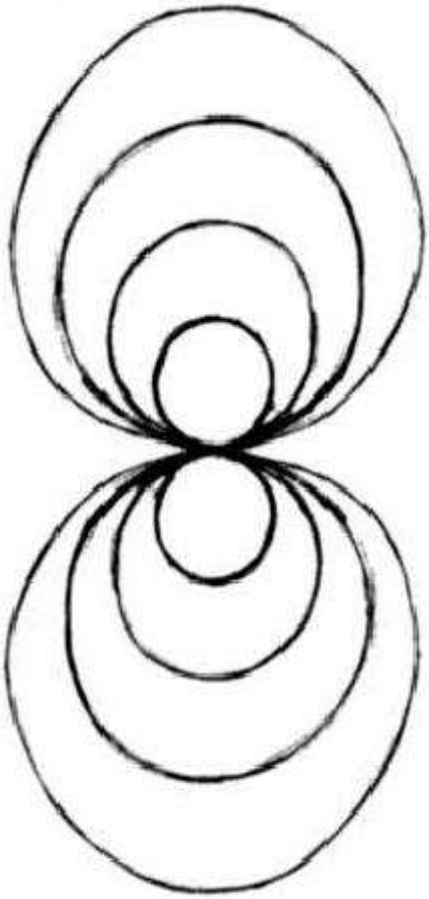
are equivalent to the four parts of the plant. Earth for the root; water for the stem; air for the leaf; fire for the flower. They all interrelate, but the lower is drawn upwards by the higher. Water draws minerals from the earth; transpiration from the leaves draws water up the stem and into the air; the heat of the sun initiates photochemical reactions, releasing oxygen into the atmosphere. The effect of light falling upon earth is to raise each element within a living form to participate in the element above. Light-sensitive organisms grow towards the sun; there is an ascending energy. Conversely, the energy in light is transferred through air and water into energy within the physical world, in the earth element. There is a double movement: light enters the earth through photosynthesis resulting in an upward growth in plants.

The form of the plant determines the qualities of light brought down into the earth. Differently coloured flowers absorb and reflect different parts of the visible spectrum. Blue reflects blue but absorbs all other parts of the colour range; white flowers reflect almost all visible light while black absorbs. Photosynthesis generates in different plants varying forms of sugar, starch and carbohydrate. And if the form of the plant absorbs different energy patterns then the growth of the plant expresses different patterns of ascending energy. This is apparent in the gesture of the plant, be it structured like Impatiens or more random in growth, like Clematis or Cerato. Plants with a strong geometrical structure radiate

patterns of energy which order and structure the environment. In this way plant life has an additional meaning and purpose. Like the light in outer space, this radiant pattern of energy may be invisible but it becomes manifest when attention is focused on the plant. The satellite dish or receiver in this case is human consciousness. The physical plant can be utilized as food for the physical body. The energy form of a plant can be used as food for the light body.

Such an idea supposes that we have a light body, that there is more to us than the physical body. Hard to prove to the sceptic. But this thought certainly was written into everything Bach said about life, health and disease. A person does not need to be clairvoyant to 'see' the light body of a plant. It is something which can be tested empirically by anyone who cares to spend a little time. Of course, time is important since the metabolic rate of plants is so much slower. If one plant breath takes twenty-four hours it may be necessary to sit for ten or fifteen minutes before the pattern of life force in a tree begins to permeate awareness. But in time it becomes clear that each plant gives out energy as well as absorbing the light energy of the sun.

Plants use this ascending energy in general growth but focus it more particularly into the flower. Here, where the fire element is expressed, a transformation takes place leading to new life through fertilization and seed production. The broadcast energy in the flower is at its most excited and radiant: blossoming, shining with light. The intensity of the pattern is greatest as the flower opens, ready for pollination. Scent, colour and design signal this moment to insects making a pathway to the nectar and pollen. It is at this moment that flowers are picked to make an essence—combining the sun's light with the fire element of the flower. The broadcast pattern of light energy is then released in the spring water. The flower essence becomes a vehicle for preserving and transferring this light resonance to another person in another place.



If the flower is at the apex of ascending energy in the plant then the root is at the base of descending light. In the root starch is stored: a supply of energy for the next year's growth. Similarly seeds fall back to earth, pellets of energy and life potential. But there is a further descent where the light energy fixed in the physical form of plants decays and becomes transformed again. It can become coal, oil and gas—fire, or the potential for fire, in solid, liquid or gaseous form.

This is the fire used for the boiling method.*

The fire is thus transformed—from light, through the sugars of photosynthesis, to the hydro-carbon compounds of fossil fuel. Fossil fuels are then burned releasing light, heat, gases and water into the atmosphere. A similar path of transformation can be seen in the hydrological cycle as water carried in the air falls as rain, enters the earth and settles in aquifers underground. It is then reborn to the light in a spring or source. This cycle parallels the cycle of physical birth, life and death of human beings on earth. Like spring water, they are born and live on the surface of the earth, in the light. After death the physical body returns to darkness, to the elements of which it was made. Return to darkness or return to light?

This may be wandering into the realms of metaphysical speculation. Yet these observations are not invented but based upon what can be seen in the world around. This process of

observation led Charles Darwin to conclude there was an evolution in species accounting for the changes in type, whether plant or animal. His theories form the basis for contemporary 'scientific' explanations for human life: the descent of man. As far as they go these make sense and explain the adaptation of physical form to a changing environment. The problem is that no account is taken of the evolution of consciousness. Neo-Darwinian theories about life suppose an evolution based only upon physical or material form: the earth element alone. Include the idea of consciousness at the beginning of creation and it is easy to suppose a parallel evolution of both physical and non-physical forms: matter and spirit.

Light is invariably the emblem of spirit: divine light, the light of love, the light of creation. Physical light, so vital in photosynthesis, matches the light of the spirit. These two inform the populations of the world, plants and people. It is obvious when this light of the spirit shines strongly in a person, or if it shines at all. It can be seen when that same light shines in nature, more than the common light of day (see overleaf). It is this light which potentizes the mother essence in the making of a Bach remedy. It is the qualities of this light which can be described by reference to the form and gesture of a remedy plant.

The Universe is God rendered objective; at its birth it is God reborn; at its close it is God more highly evolved. So with man; his body is himself externalized, an objective manifestation of his internal nature; he is the expression of himself, the materialization of the qualities of his consciousness!

With these words at the end of *Heal Thyself* Bach expressed his sense for evolution of life and consciousness. The thought can be expressed another way. People are born with particular qualities—physical, emotional, mental and spiritual. These can be equated to each of the four elements earth, water, air and fire. They are the qualities given for life. These qualities are set to the test of reality on earth and there is the opportunity to evolve greater capacities such as for love and learning; the great soul lessons which Bach described.; Through this process, life on earth evolves. That which is learnt in life burns as soul flame certainties, soul flame qualities. These are carried with us as we enter another level

of reality, the next dimension.

The same William Wordsworth who thought so little of the Larch tree (page no) was eloquent about light and how our eyes acclimatize to mundane reality:

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:

The soul that rises with us, our life's Star,

Hath had elsewhere its setting,

And cometh from afar:

Not in entire forgetfulness,

And not in utter nakedness,

But trailing clouds of glory do we come

From God, who is our home:

Heaven lies about us in our infancy!

Shades of the prison-house begin to close

Upon the growing Boy,

But he beholds the light, and whence it flows,

He sees it in his joy;

The Youth, who daily further from the east

Must travel, still is Nature's priest,

And by the vision splendid

Is on his way attended;

At length the Man perceives it die away,

And fade into the common light of day.

Wordsworth found but a painful inspiration in nature to bring

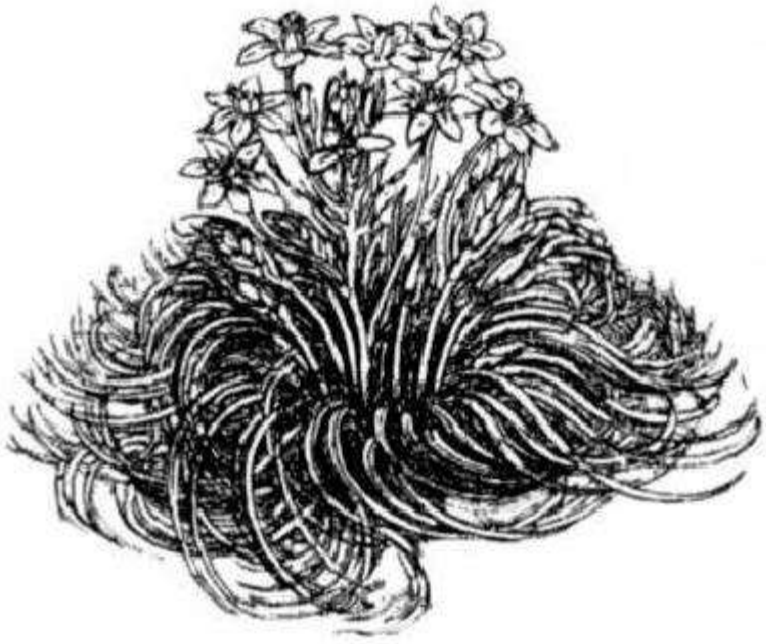
him back towards the light:

To me the meanest flower that blows can give Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.

(From *Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood,* written 1802-4, first published 1807)

17 • Making the Pattern, Breaking the Pattern

LEONARDO DA VINCI, great genius of the Italian Renaissance, was rly interested in botany. He made careful studies of plants, which he used in his paintings. They were often symbolic, allowing the painting to be understood at several different levels.* A small four-petalled flower (from the genus *Crucifer)* held by the infant Jesus, pointed to knowledge of His coming crucifixion: the plant chosen to foreshadow the future. The geometry of flowers and their patterns of growth and form were also used by artists and architects to express the divine impulses of balance and harmony within creation. This found its clearest and most brilliant expression in the Gothic cathedrals, especially in the rose window, with its twelve-fold geometry and dazzling colour.



Leonardo's Star of Bethlehem

Star of Bethlehem

One of Leonardo's drawings shows the small flowers of the Star of Bethlehem. These have a perfect geometry, just like the cathedral window. Six pointed petals surround six stamens, which

form a coronet around the six-celled ovary with its single style (interestingly 6+6+6+1=19, like the Second Nineteen remedies). The flowers express a formal design, yet Leonardo has drawn leaves as a wild, swirling vortex of lines. They are like spiralling water. Surprisingly, for Leonardo was usually accurate in his depiction of plants,' this is not as the leaves are found in nature. When young, the leaves are straight like small spears; by the time the flowers open, they have begun to die back and collapse. Why would Leonardo choose to exaggerate the picture of Star of Bethlehem in this way? What might be the symbolism? It might be that he has drawn the inner character (the soul quality, if you will) of the plant. This combines static geometry with the generative movement of life force. The dynamic movement of the leaves could represent the turbulent experience of life which supports the pure, crystalline form of the flowers; spirit born into the material world.

The beautiful white flowers of the Star of Bethlehem *(Ornithogalum umbellatum)* were chosen by Bach as a remedy for shock and distress:

The shock of serious news, the loss of some one dear, the fright following an accident, and such like.

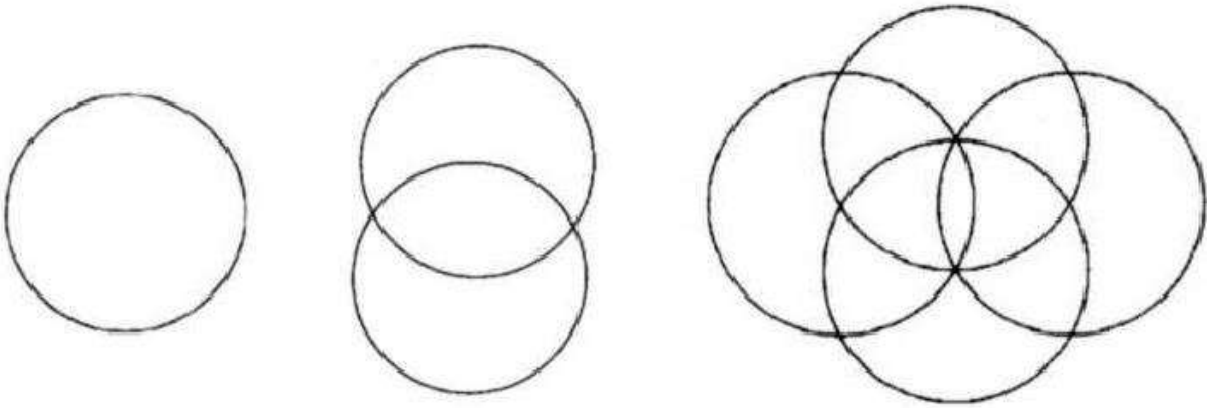
For those who for a time refuse to be consoled this remedy brings com fort.

It is not difficult to imagine that Bach would have occasion to need such a remedy, although there is no record of any particular event which prompted its discovery. Nor is it known whether it came before or after Walnut and Holly in the sequence. It flowers from late April through to early June, reaching a peak in mid-May.

A vital ingredient in Bach's five-flower rescue combination, Star of Bethlehem is one of the most significant remedies in the whole Bach system. The action of the remedy brings balance and calm to those caught up in the swirling whirlpool of life trauma—

just such a picture as Leonardo drew. The geometry of the flowers helps to reassemble the structure of life when it has been tumbled and broken by shock.

The six-pointed star of this plant is unique among Bach's flowers. The others are mostly five-petalled, like the rose family (Crab Apple and Wild Rose) or four-petalled (like Mustard and Holly). To see the significance of this, take a piece of paper and a pair of compasses; then draw a circle. This circle is one. It is a perfect construction, a line without beginning or end, a symbol of unity.

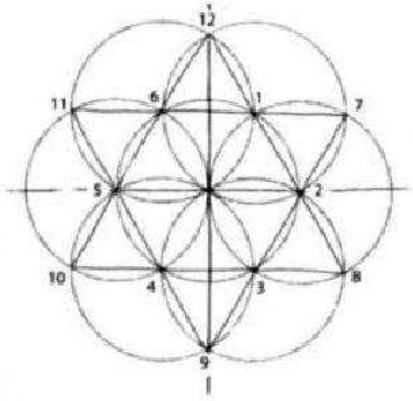


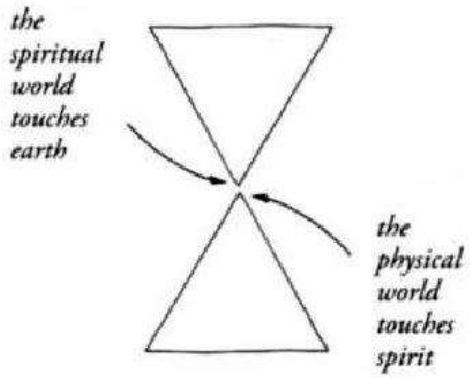
Place the point of the compasses anywhere on the circumference of the circle, and, using exactly the same setting (radius), draw another circle. The second circle passes precisely through the centre of the first. One leads to both two and three: there are now two circles and the overlap—that which joins them. Where the second circle crosses the line of the first there are two more points on which a circle may be drawn. Continue in this way and, if the setting of the compasses is maintained, six circles fit precisely around the first.

Again this is a perfect construction, just like the single circle at the beginning. It has moved from 1 to 2 to 3 to 6 and 7. Many ideas have been based on this simple drawing: it may explain why there are seven days in a week, six to work and the seventh day of rest. The number of sections in the drawing add up to both 12 and 24. This gives the months of the y ear and the hours of the day:

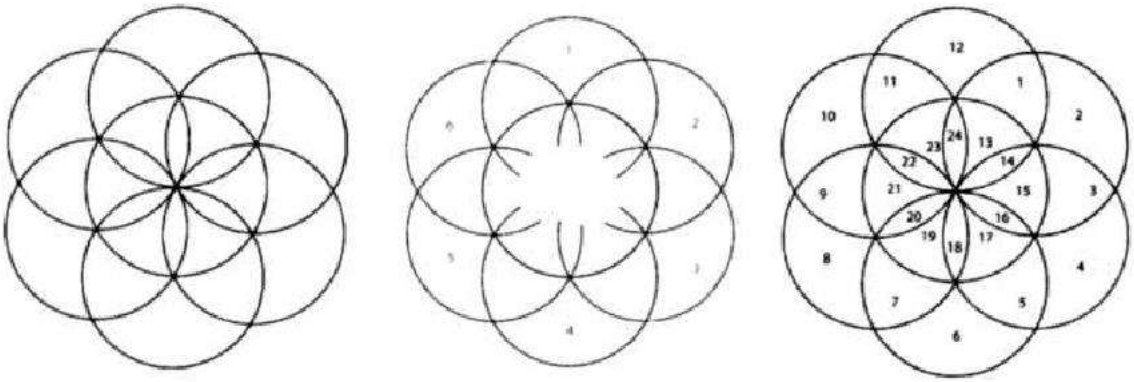
divisions of time and space.

If, as well as a pair of compasses a straight edge or ruler is also used, by bisecting the original circle it is possible to construct many other geometrical forms. Connect the points 12 — 9 then 5 — 2 and a cross is drawn. Connect 1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 — 6 and there is a hexagon; 12 — 10 — 8 — 12 then 11 — 9 — 7 — 11 and there is a Star of David; many more patterns can be created.



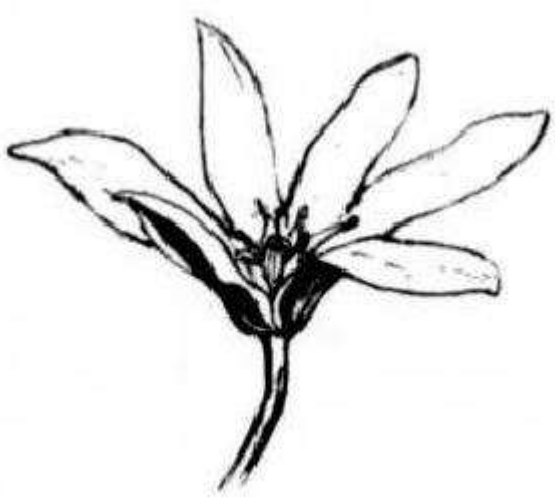


The Star of David is composed of two triangles, sometimes used to represent the coming together of heaven and earth: one is pointing down for the spiritual world, one pointing up for the physical world. It is the balance of forces represented by the triangles which leads to harmony and health. That is the positive state for Star of Bethlehem: order and balance. All of this geometry can be seen in the star form of the flowers. *



For those who experience trauma there is a dislocation

between the physical and subtle body—the geometry is distorted. This may happen as a result of physical accidents (broken bones, wounds, bruising, a fall) or as a result of some psychological trauma (`serious news, the loss of someone dear, the fright following an accident'). In both cases there is disruption in the normal flow of energy and information. The remedy acts to repair this by realigning the matrix of subtle and physical links in living forms.



There is another way to interpret the quality and gesture of Star of Bethlehem. The flowers shine with light, lying like a carpet of stars among the grass. They are particularly sensitive to sunshine and only open on warm, clear days (like Gentian, page 13o). The buds unfold afresh each morning. One local name for Star is 'eleven o'clock lady' (the French call it *dame d'onze heures).* The flower may last up to three weeks before the petals tire of this daily movement and collapse. On the back of the petals is a broad green stripe which camouflages the flowers when closed. Opening in the sun, they bring a sudden sparkle of light to the meadow grass. Looking more closely into individual flowers reveals six points of yellow pollen as the stamens surround a golden jewel in the heart of the star, warming and strengthening the white light.

Parkinson, writing in 1629, called this 'the ordinary starre of Bethlehem [which] is so common, and well knowne in all countries and places, that it is almost needlesse to describe it, having many green leaves with white lines therein, and a few white flowers set about the toppe of the stalke with greenish lines down the backe'. The white line in the narrow leaf is characteristic although the leaves are only prominent in spring and often wither by the time the flowers appear. As it is a bulb there is only one stem, though this

branches to form an 'umbel'—a flat-topped flowering head (hence 0. *umbellatum).* Individual flowers are thus linked back to a common axis in the central stem: a miniature tree form. This structure is common to many plants, but with Star of Bethlehem the strength and clarity of the form is pronounced.

Star of Bethlehem

The Star of Bethlehem remedy is prepared by the boiling method (page 199). It is somewhat shocking to see these beautiful flowering stems collapse in the heat of boiling water. One might think this remedy should be made by the more gentle sun method. But it is not for a gentle condition. Fire transforms. It brings about a change in state. This can also be said of accidents, shock and trauma. They break up the pattern of the past and interrupt the established order of life experience. At times this may be necessary to allow for new growth. When people experience the fire of change they may react with symptoms of grief and distress. Star of Bethlehem helps to reform a stable patterning in the emotional life. Dr Bach called it 'the comforter and soother of pains and sorrows'.

White Chestnut

White Chestnut

Where Star of Bethlehem is needed to

reassemble a pattern with clear lines of geometry and structure, White Chestnut dispels a repeating pattern of thoughts. These thoughts, said Bach, 'seem to circle round and round and cause mental torture'.' The link to Star of Bethlehem can be seen by imagining an accident and attendant shock. Star would bring comfort and ease the trauma. But suppose the sequence of events is played and replayed in the mind, like a tape recorder on an endless loop. That produces the White Chestnut state: 'thoughts which worry and will remain, or if for a time thrown out, will return's'

The flowers of White Chestnut, *Aesculus hippocastanum,* lack defined shape or design. Singleflowers, thirty to forty of them, are held in a loose pyramid on a central stem. A complex spiral of small side branches hold *sets* of two, three or four flowers. The effect is made more irregular by the fact that on these smaller stalks the blooms open randomly through the weeks of early summer. Bursts of varying intensity pulse through the massed light of the flowering candles. Each single flower has five amorphous white petals, delicate and beautiful, but uneven in form. The centre of each flower is splashed with yellow, which quickly turns to red on pollination. Fringed with hairs, the petals grow larger as the bud opens. The botanical form varies: some flowers are infertile—this limits the number of seeds once the first flowers are fertilized, setting a restraint on the future generation.* In a perfect White Chestnut flower there are five sepals, five petals, seven stamens, one pistil and a three-chambered ovary containing two rudimentary seeds. Another contrast with the clear form of Star. The seven stamens are very prominent, curving out like tongues from a mouth. Altogether the impression is one of change, movement and asymmetry. The flowers are not disorderly but do not conform to a clear pattern or geometry.

If few flowers set seed, fewer still develop as ripe fruits; maybe only two or three from each flowering head. These are the well-known conkers of the horse chestnut tree. They fall in October, the outer case splitting open when they hit the ground—indicative of the plant gesture, as the form is broken apart when it reaches earth. The prickle-studded seed case is designed both to cushion the fall and to ensure that the sphere breaks open. The spikes, like Gorse leaves (page 148) and the prickles of Wild Rose (page 269), stimulate action in order to break the mental pattern. This is vital if the seed of a new future is to be set free. As if to confirm the varying form of the White Chestnut flowers, no two of these 'conkers' are exactly alike. Gathered by schoolchildren for conker fights, they are involved in more hitting and breaking apart.[9] If not removed, a hundred small saplings may grow beneath a tree in springtime. But they will fail through lack of light and moisture.

The horse chestnut tree has a characteristic outline, with a

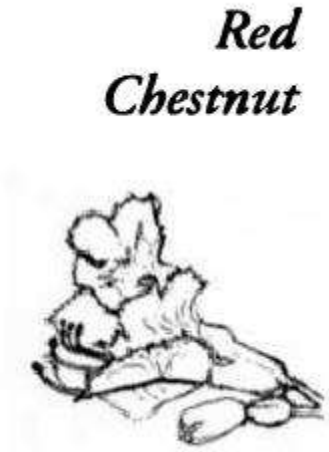
forked trunk and radiating boughs. The branches have a curious habit of curving and drooping, rather like Larch. It is a weak form, lacking integrity and upright gesture. The roots spread over the surface of the ground and do not penetrate deeply into the earth. The wood splits easily and limbs will often break off in high winds. Mature trees rarely live more than 200 years, usually less. The bark starts out lithe and smooth but becomes fractured: rough squares peel away from the trunk like *scales,* uneven and unstructured. Only the leaves have a more powerful and regular form. Five, six or seven leaflets form a palmate or compound leaf; the largest may be as much as thirty centimetres long. The single leaflet is strongly ribbed with a prominent skeleton, the edges jagged, the surface smooth and hairless. Here, at least, is an indication of determination and clarity, as with Impatiens.

White Chestnut is prepared by the sun method—the only remedy of the Second Nineteen which is not a boiler. Puzzling perhaps? If all the other mother essences which Dr Bach made in 1935 used his new boiling method, why did he suddenly change for White Chestnut? It was not merely the convenience of sunshine in an otherwise cloudy summer (page 201). The most cogent argument is that Bach had already made a boiling remedy from this species: Chestnut Bud.'°

Though he used leaf buds and not open flowers for Chestnut Bud (page 207) the remedy comes from the whole tree and aspects of the whole tree inform the gesture. So Chestnut Bud must be closely related to White Chestnut. Indeed, this is so. Both speak of breaking up repeated patterns, but White Chestnut, because it uses the flowers and the sun method, is aimed more at a mental pattern, less at the life action. There is a difference in the level of consciousness involved.

This issue, concerning the level of consciousness involved, is complex but significant. Dr Bach's description for White Chestnut spoke of 'times when the interest of the moment is not strong enough to keep the mind full'." This points to a problem of the mind, not an action of the will. The air element is predominant—that is why the leaves carry the strongest patterning (page 242). In this respect, there is a similarity to Clematis (page 47), which is in the same group as White Chestnut: *Not Sufficient Interest in Present Circumstances.* [12] What may appear to be a Clematis state can be White Chestnut; people have the same abstracted air. The overall gesture may be different, but there are elements in common: the white flowers, the rough bark, the smooth leaf and so on. In this same group for *Not Sufficient Interest* . is Chestnut Bud. Like Clematis and White Chestnut, Chestnut Bud lacks observation and involvement in life. But the boiling method, combined with the part of the plant used, brings out a different aspect in the remedy.

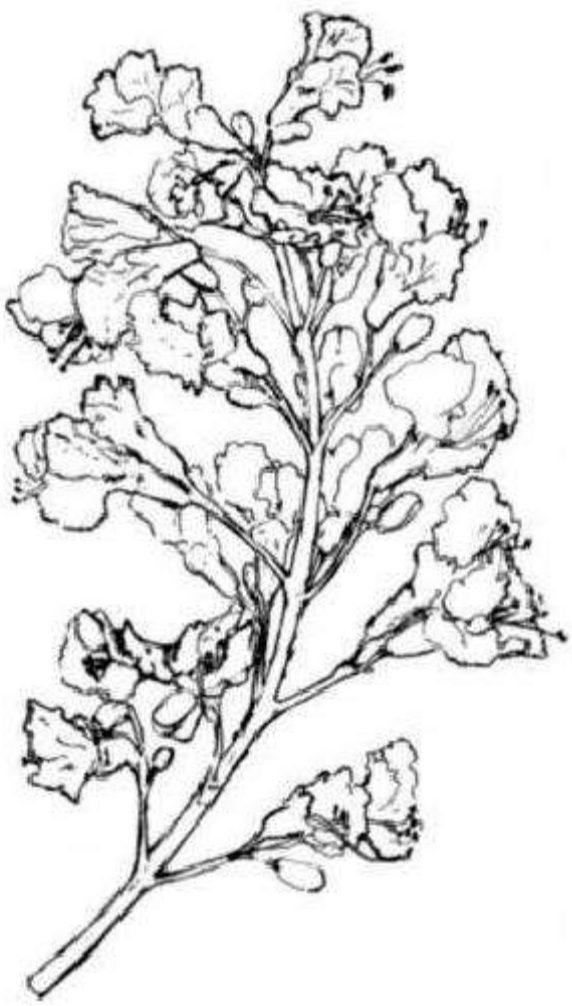
Red Chestnut



If a similarity in gesture notifies a similarity in emotional state then White Chestnut must be close to Red Chestnut—they are related species. Red Chestnut is like the white horse chestnut, but a slighter tree, of smaller build. The most obvious difference is in the flowers, which are rose-red, opening a week or two later than the white. Red Chestnut, *Aesculus carnea,* is the offspring of a cross between *A. hi ppocastanum,* White Chestnut, and *A. Pavia,* the red buckeye of

the southern United States. It dates from about 1818 so there is no possibility of some divine creation of this species at the beginning of time—it is a hybrid.'] Nonetheless, *A. carnea,* Red Chestnut, does breed true and has become a species in its own right.

Bach described the Red Chestnut state as 'for those who find it difficult not to be anxious for other people'. [14] The story goes that he was doing some work in the garden at *Mount Vernon,* when he cut himself. According to Nora Weeks' account's he was chopping wood—though we might wonder what he was doing chopping wood at the end of May—when the axe slipped and he 'gashed his wrist'. He was in shock and given first aid* but, although 'pale and shaky and almost fainting from loss of blood' ,i[6] it was the reaction of Nora and friends which claimed Bach's attention. He felt their fear and anxiety at his condition made matters worse. Nora noted that, at this time, so acute was his sensitivity that he experienced any worry, depression or fear in other people as an 'actual physical hurt'.`? Feeling the worry of his friends, he declared that he had just experienced the emotional state for his next remedy: Red Chestnut's fear for the safety of others. A day or two later he found the flowers and made a mother tincture by the boiling method.

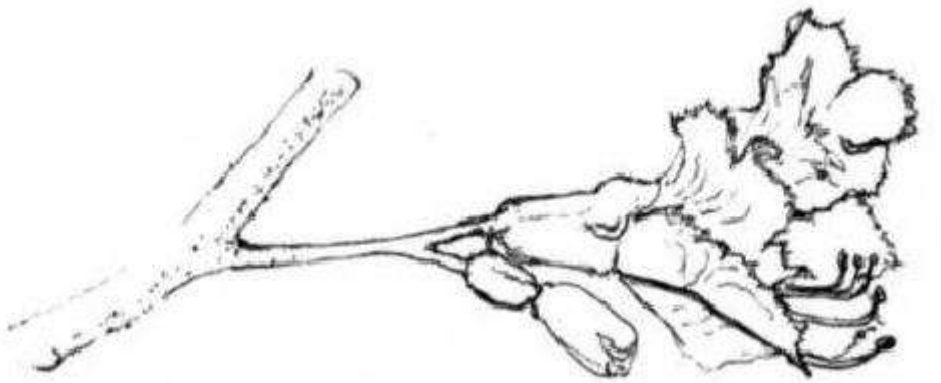


The story of Red Chestnut led Nora Weeks to conclude we are all susceptible to the influence of other people's thoughts, for good or ill. Negative thoughts, even if unexpressed, have a powerful impact. Thoughts for safety, health and success, likewise. So the connection between Red and White Chestnut is here in the process of thinking: how to break or change the pattern of thought. Not surprisingly, the gesture of the two types of tree is similar.

They have the same structure of trunk and branches, the same flaky bark, similar buds, similar leaves. But there are distinct differences. In all respects a Red Chestnut tree is less robust, more liable to disease and damage. The seeds are much smaller, the casing smooth and often empty—no valuable conkers here! The strength of the remedy comes more from the power in the colour of the flowers.

Being a hybrid, Red Chestnut often shows variations between one tree and another. Some flowers are deep orange or vermilion, others more pink and touched with a mauve-red. There is a yellowy centre which darkens after pollination. So there is both change and variety in flower colouring. None of the other Bach flowers is so strongly coloured.* Bach said of people who need Red Chestnut, 'often they have ceased to worry about themselves ...'. It is as if the red flowers voice an outward concern, not a fear for the self—red is

coming towards you, an active, stimulating colour, projecting energy. This contrasts with White Chestnut and Clematis, which internalize. Red Chestnut fear for others is also in contrast to the Chicory cover-care for the welfare of others' which, with the recessive blue flowers is really an internal concern for self.



Whence comes the Red Chestnut state? Dr Bach noted a concern for others, 'especially those dear to us'. It is as if, in the past, something did indeed happen to someone loved: Red Chestnut is a renewed response to that traumatic life event. These people's fear is partly based upon such a memory and, as with Honeysuckle (page 264), the red flowers call into the present, saying 'stop!' to the pattern of the past. Another look at Nora's concern for Dr Bach's wood-cutting accident indicates that this was not the first time Nora saw Edward in pain and needing help. Any person in a Red Chestnut state resonates with accidents and mishaps which they remember, projecting that image upon a child or

loved one:

If they return late, there is the thought that some accident must have happened; if they go for a holiday, the dread that some calamity will befall them. Some illnesses become [grave concerns, as if] *very serious complaints, and there is a great anxiety even for those who are not dangerously ill. Always fearing the worst and always anticipating misfortune for them.*

Red Chestnut is like maternal concern for a daughter. That does not exclude fathers and sons, rather it addresses the mother in us all: protecting and caring for the vulnerable. Red Chestnut is a weak tree, in contrast with Oak or Elm; it needs protection. With stooping branches, tumbling like tresses of hair, Red Chestnut has a feminine appearance. Yet the red flowers are powerful. This gesture speaks of empathy and an understanding which appreciates how others feel; of sensitivity and openness which does not overwhelm; of strength and the determination to give emotional support.

Bearing in mind that Bach was being thrust (Nora called it 'passing through') from one emotional state to another, we might consider what really was happening at this time. Back in 1928 (page 31) he left behind the physical laboratory, with its petri dishes, flasks and retort stands, and travelled out from London with the only laboratory he now needed: he was conducting experiments upon himself. By 1935, he must have been both fascinated and appalled by what those experiments had revealed. The experience of successive emotional states and the process of searching for a remedy must have been almost familiar by now. Yet so many questions remained. How did he come upon each successive experience? Were they merely accidental? If planned, then planned by whom? If some other agency was guiding this process of discovery or forcing Bach along a particular path, then who or what was it? Was Bach following the instructions of his teachers? If so, who were they, and how did they communicate? If the process of discovery originated only with Bach himself (his higher self or soul being the instructing voice) then how did he distinguish that voice? In chapter four of *Free Thyself* he wrote:

Our soul (the still small voice, God's own voice) speaks to us through our intuition, our instincts, through our desires, ideals, our ordinary likes and dislikes; in whichever way it is easiest for us individually to hear. How else can He speak to us? Our true instincts, desires, likes or dislikes are given us so that we can interpret the spiritual commands of our soul by means of our limited physical perceptions, for it is not possible for many of us yet to be in direct communion with our Higher Self.

Clear enough, apparently. But the discovery of each new remedy also brought him into a state where he was acutely suffering the very problems of separation from higher self.

Of Dr Bach's writings and letters little or nothing comes from this period, the summer of 1935. He wrote notes for an essay on pain" and a short *cri de coeur* explaining, perhaps, his view of what was happening to him:

No man would be a leader amongst others for any length of time unless he were more expert in his special branch of knowledge than his followers: whether it be army statesmanship or whatever it may be. It therefore follows, to be a leader against trouble, difficulties, disease, persecution and so forth, the leader must still have a greater knowledge, a more intimate experience than, pray God, his followers need ever suffer.

But the most eloquent account of how he felt and what he was experiencing came from the remedies he found and the indication for their use.

So, by the end of May, he felt a failure. Despite his hard work and the constant attempt to make progress he was discontented and blaming himself for a lack of success. Dr Bach a failure?

Pine

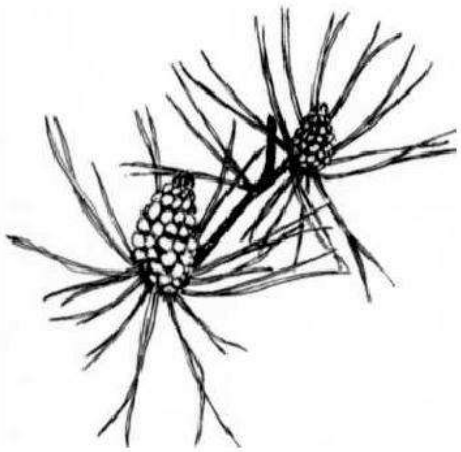
Who would believe it? Ridiculous! No, not ridiculous; he felt a failure, not *was* a

failure. His description for Pine reads as a clear statement of his circumstances. He is saying: 'I blame myself. Even though **I** have been successful, I know that I could have done better. I work hard but I make errors and I am dissatisfied with what I achieve.' What is the origin of this state of mind? Putting it baldly, it derives from severity of the father. If Red Chestnut concerns apprehension in the mother then Pine concerns stricture from the father.

Many people have written books about Dr Bach's remedies. Often these are based upon an author's case notes, describing the remedies according to practical experience in diagnosis and therapeutic use. Taking three such authorities it is interesting to compare their descriptions for Pine. Chancellor, who compiled his book using material from Nora Weeks, focused upon the self-condemnation associated with Pine, contrasting Pine and Rockwater. Rockwater people feel good about themselves and are proud of their harsh values, Pine people feel bad about themselves and are discontented with their efforts. But Chancellor does not tell us why. Mechtild Scheffer, who says she based her book upon fourteen years' experience in Germany, goes more deeply. She pivots the action of the remedy on the Old Testament/New Testament values of God's severity and forgiveness. The Pine state, she says, comes from 'dogmatic, excessively moral concepts and powerful commandments'. Using keywords she makes reference to the Protestant work ethic, guilt about sex, an all-seeing God, suffering and penitence, moral severity, the expectation of punishment. There is, for her, a clear link to Christian salvation, Jesus Christ and the sins of the world. For a third authority, there is the description provided by Richard Katz and Patricia Kaminski in their American *Flower Essence Repertory.* The Pine person, they write, *feels* a disproportionate guilt. 'These feelings may arise from childhood, when the person learned to internalize blame for dysfunction in the family system, or they may stem from a religious background which emphasizes sin and error more than salvation and grace'. They go on to point out the context of giving in for-giving. That is, of not withholding love from the self, of releasing energy that is blocked and not holding on to past patterning.

All these help to describe Pine; they are based upon

experiences of various people which trace their roots back to the remedy state. Scheffer's description narrows to a Christian view of guilt and forgiveness, while Katz and Kaminski make a more open appeal to 'Father and Fathering Forgiveness'. Katz and Kaminski also make a significant cross-reference to 'time relationship', their subject heading for remedies which have a connection to the past. This will be borne out by observation of the life history of the tree.



Male Pine flowers

A few observations about Edward Bach and his possible relationship with father and family help to complete the background. He was 'a delicate boy's' and while Weeks recalled his boyhood determination to be a doctor he actually began work, aged sixteen, in his father's brass foundry. As the oldest son, perhaps he was expected to enter the family business. He worked there, unhappily, for three years before telling his father he wanted to be a doctor—clearly he took a long time to approach the conversation. According to Weeks he felt that he could not ask his family for money. In chapter five of *Heal Thyself* Bach stated and restated his view that parents must not interfere with the will of their child: 'independence, individuality and freedom should be taught from the beginning and the child should be encouraged as early as possible in life to think and act for himself. All parental control should be relinquished step by step ... He repeated this in *Free Thyself* 'so many suppress their real desires and become square pegs in round holes: through the wishes of a parent . . : and on the next page 'some from childhood have the knowledge of what they are meant to do, and keep to it throughout their lives: and some know in childhood, but are deterred by contra-suggestions and circumstances, and the discouragement of others'. Why make such an issue of this unless he had felt himself to be constrained by the expectations of his father? The potential for family difficulty was clearly there. And it is a part of the quality of Dr Bach's discoveries that they were not merely theoretical but

grounded in the reality of his (and everyone's) life experience.

So Pine is an emotional state Bach understood; it spoke with the voice of his past:

For those who blame themselves. Even when successful they think that they could have done better and are never content with their efforts or the results. They are hard-working and suffer much from the faults they attach to themselves. Sometimes if there is any mistake it is due to another, but they will claim responsibility even for that.

For Bach it may have been a straightforward case of amplifying this emotional state and finding the Rower which resonated in response: by now he must have become practised at this procedure. Observation of the Pine tree's gesture is almost separate and independent of the remedy description; there is little obvious correlation. However, in the life cycle of the tree we can begin to see how this remedy manifests itself in the form of the Scots Pine, *Pinus sylvestris.*

Female Pine flowers and immature cones

Pine is a conifer, one of a group of trees which share characteristics such as narrow, needle-like leaves, resinous sap and a fruit in the form of a woody cone. They are called gymnosperms because the seeds are 'naked' (page 212)—'their ovules, which later become seeds, are born exposed on the scale of the immature cones or female flowers'. The only other gymnosperm in the Bach range is Larch. In evolutionary terms gymnosperms are older than other flowering plants; they formed the major component of vegetation which was compressed to make coal and so relate to the fire element formed within the earth. This immediately links Pine to the past and deep processes of change.Pine is an emotional condition which develops over time. Like a mole it burrows out of sight, reappearing unexpectedly. Or, as with certain traumatic events, it remains buried in memory, to surface years later. This delay can be seen in the process of pollination and growth of the seed. While the flowers of Red and White Chestnut change colour almost immediately, to signal fertilization, Pine has a prolonged period of incubation during which seed embryos develop. The process is complex. It takes nearly a year for the male pollen grain and the female ovule to mature fully inside a cone and for fertilization to occur.;? During this time cones remain outwardly unchanged; in January or February they are still small brown knobs, as seen last summer, bending over at the end of shoots. When spring arrives a new shoot will grow upwards and produce flowers. Meanwhile the cone, now sitting under the branch, swells and begins to form seeds internally. These will not be ready until the following spring, when the cone is nearly two years old. So three stages of cone growth can be seen on a branch: the female flower, last year's immature cone

and the ripe cone of the year before. A picture of successive generations: grandparent, parent and child.

Three generations together

When the seeds are ripe the cone will open and release them. Here too the Pine tree behaves in a most remarkable way: the cone opens and closes according to the conditions. When it is wet the woody bracts close up, sealing the seeds in their compartments. Only when the air is dry and warm will they open. It is protective behaviour yet controlling of the future. Take a dry cone and run water over it and you will see all this happen; it takes a few minutes. The seeds have a small wing and are carried away from the parent tree, anything up to 750 metres. This slow drifting down to earth is paralleled in other remedy plants whose seeds are carried on the wind: Clematis, Wild Oat, Aspen, Hornbeam, Larch. Each of them shares a quality of detachment, of not being directly engaged in life at the present moment. For people in a Pine state, this debility is in the need to escape from memories of parental control; their inner child still feels something has been done which is wrong. They are held in the past.

Germination among Pine seeds is very good: in the positive remedy condition there is a strong drive to take up life opportunity. Johns quotes a nice passage by Sir T. D. Lauder in his *British Trees:*

It is curious to observe how the work of renovation goes on in a Pine forest. The young seedlings come up as thick as they do in the

nurseryman's seed-beds; and in the same relative degree of thickness do they continue to grow till they are old enough to be cut down. The competition which takes place between the adjacent individual plants creates a rivalry that increases their upward growth, whilst the exclusion of air [and light] *prevents the formation of lateral branches, or destroys them after they are formed.*

Does competition among siblings also play a part in the remedy? The trees grow up straight and tall, strong T forms, independent and individually powerful. They are able to withstand exposure, cold winds and snow, because the fine leaves and bare trunk offer less resistance than other trees.

Just as the trunk is straight, so too the root; where possible it goes straight down. Such taproots show a connection to the past and to family (see Chicory, page 102). The bark is rough, broken and peeling, with the appearance of half-healed wounds which weep, oozing resin from the tree. On the upper trunk the bark becomes papery and scabrous with a blotchy, amber colour breaking out through the skin like eczema or psoriasis. There is a strange kind of secret in this, as though the tree would like to hide the very thing which reveals itself—that is in the nature of guilt. Sap from Pine trees was used to make turpentine for paints. It also is a source of pitch, tar and a range of gums and resins which are used as weatherproofing and preservatives. Pine oil is distilled from

the leaves: it is used as an inhalant for coughs and bronchitis and as a disinfectant. The link between Pine and household cleansers is both amusing and serious since contamination is associated with guilt.

Scots Pines are the natural forest trees of Scotland. As in Beech woods, Pines exclude light from the understorey: nothing else can grow. Old Pine needles also form a slow-rotting and acidic blanket at the foot of the tree which deters other species—a picture of intolerance. But, while Beech is intolerant of others (page 223), Pine is intolerant of self. In England Pines are planted rather than self-sown; on hilltops and other prominent positions they show boundaries and paths. Richard Mabey in *Flora Britannica* confirms what was observed by Alfred Watkins in *The Old Straight Track* that Pines marked drove-roads across the Welsh borders. On the old Trewyn estate, not far from Abergavenny, clumps of Pines are said to have been planted at the edge of the property so that the Edwardian owner could stand on his terrace and point out to his guests the extent of his family's land. Because they are used as signals or markers, such trees have a solitary air. It is not quite loneliness but the sense of standing apart. We speak of wind sighing in the Pines: it is a lament of sadness, a memory of regret.

Clearly Pine is a complex remedy state. It involves more than guilt and self-blame. It contains a personal life story for the individual, parts of which may be hidden or suppressed. Pine helps to establish way-markers in the biography or life journey, like the hilltop clumps of trees which are prominent in a landscape. Acting

within the detail of a person's feelings, Pine also helps to straighten out tangled and confused emotions—just as Pine's needle-leaves are narrow and straight. The leaves are similar to those of Larch and they offer the same thought of needing to clarify and reassess self-worth. But Pine, being an evergreen, keeps its leaves through the winter, hanging on to the past. Each year some new leaves appear with the new shoots which also bear flowers—the older leaves fall after three or four years. The dark red female flowers, so strong and upright at first, bend around through ninety degrees during the summer. They continue to turn and face downwards as the cone develops. It is an expression of turning again to look at the past, the experience of your life on earth.

The Pine remedy can take us on a journey to reassess the past so we can be more accurate about present circumstances. Just as Pine involves this time relationship, so too does Honeysuckle. Nora quoted Dr Bach as saying of Honeysuckle:

Honeysuckle

Honeysuckle

This is the remedy to remove from the mind the regrets and sorrows of the past, to counteract all influences, all wishes and desires of the past and to bring us back to the present …

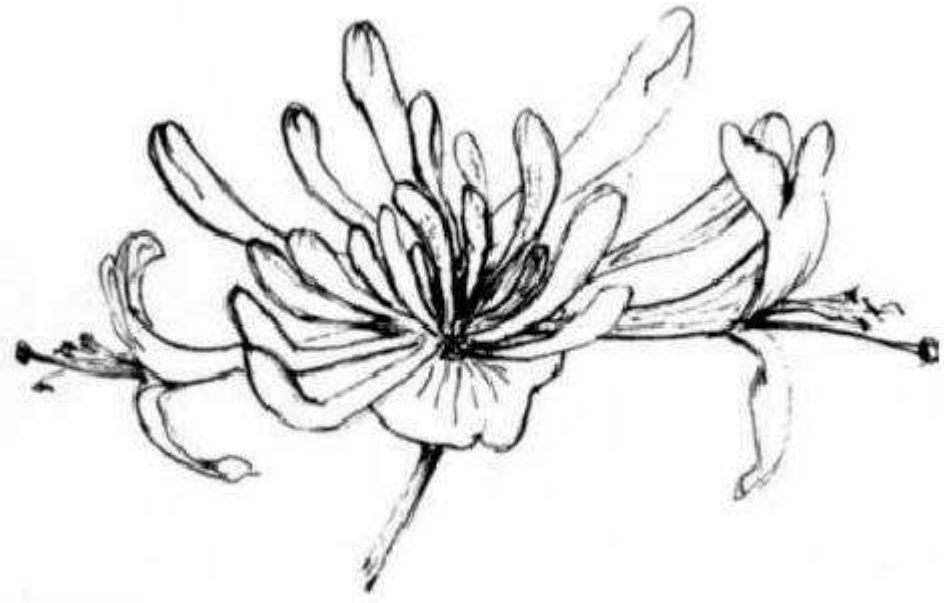
It is rather as if Pine had pushed Bach back towards his childhood to re-evaluate family involvements and, mentally, he had become stuck there—and so needed Honeysuckle to get back to the present.

Honeysuckle also links to Clematis. Clematis looks to the future, dreaming of better times to come; Honeysuckle dreams of the past and does not expect such happiness again. The two remedies are like the two faces of the god Janus—one looking forward to the New Year, the other looking to the old—after whom January is named.

Significantly, *Lonicera caprifolium,* which is Bach's Honeysuckle, begins to break into leaf in December-January, when the sun is in the constellation of Capricorn. True, *caprifolium* is derived from the Latin *capri,* 'of goats', and this is followed in French by 'Chevre-feuille', the German 'Geiß blatt' and in Italian 'Capri-foglio'. But apart from goats having an appetite for young leaves at any time of year, *caper* the goat takes us nowhere. However, the astrological sign Capricorn, ruled by Saturn, slow planet of memories and old age, does have a mythology and symbolism which speaks of Honeysuckle's link to the past. But after all, *caprifolium* is only a name.

The gesture of the plant confirms Bach's observations.

Honeysuckle is a shrubby climber with multiple trailing stems, very much like Clematis (pages 47-8). It threads through branches of other supporting hedgerow trees. In old age the bark becomes fibrous, although the younger shoots are notably smooth. Like Clematis, it has a simple, glabrous leaf. The flowers are also constructed in a similar way, with multiple individual blooms on a single head—what is called a terminal whorl. There are many features which distinguish the two plants, but similarities illustrate their kinship as remedies. The contrast is seen in the detail of taxonomy, colour and structure of the flower, the seed and means of reproduction, the terrain in which the two plants grow, in the life span and seasonal cycle.



Externally, the Honeysuckle flowers are strikingly red. Like Red Chestnut, their energy is moving forward (page 255). The buds have a sealed end: crimson tubes formed by five petals fused together along their length. These swell until, curling backwards, the bell of the flower is revealed, shaped like a small trumpet, as if sounding a clarion call, a reveille. The stamens pop out, spreading like fingers. This happens in the evening around seven pm, taking two or three minutes for a flower to open. For all its bright colouring, Honeysuckle is primarily a flower of the night. And at night the sweet scent draws in the insects required for pollination.

Sir Ferdinand von Mueller (1825-96), a German botanist who emigrated to Australia at the age of thirty-two, studied *Lonicera caprifolium* and found six different species of hawkmoth which visited the plant. The significance of this was noted by Sir John Lubbock (1843-1913). A keen follower of Darwin, Lubbock pointed out that only the Hawkmoth, with its exceptionally long proboscis, was able to extract all the nectar in the long, slender tube of the flower. Hawkmoths hover like hawks and as they do so they must brush against the flowers' sexual organs. The pollen has 'needle-like prickles, so that it sticks to the soft fluff of the moth's body' and is then carried on to an adjacent style for pollination. Pollination occurs on the night the flower opens. The bright white interior of the flower, which acted as a beacon to the moths, turns dusky yellow by the second day. As with White Chestnut the signal is immediate. The intimacy of this adaptation between flower and moth appears to confirm Darwin's theories of natural selection, but it also illustrates the gesture of the Honeysuckle flower which ignores daytime insects and proffers nectar for nocturnal moths. Dreaming is a nocturnal process. In the Honeysuckle state memories are projected on the dark screen of sleep; either a literal sleep or the symbolic sleep of people without *interest in present circumstances.* Thinking of the past puts one to sleep in the present. The sweet scent of Honeysuckle makes the same point: nothing can transport the imagination so quickly to the past as a smell—scent is the gatekeeper of memory.

The leaves of *L. caprifolium* are capable of independent movement: the stalk turns the leaf to receive the most light. Olive leaves have the same property (page 179). But those leaves growing towards the end of a shoot, beneath the flowering head, have no stalks and are perfoliate (or connate): two join together around a stem, forming one disk-shaped leaf. This perfoliate leaf is specific to Bach's Honeysuckle and is not found on others, such as *L. periclymenum.* These leaves form stages or platforms. It has been suggested that they represent a link between Honeysuckle and reincarnation. Certainly they do suggest a process of passing time, just as the flowers do with their red buds, the white interior of those freshly opened, then the third stage, yellowed after pollination—a three-day picture of yesterday, today, tomorrow.

Honeysuckle forms red berries. These cluster at the end of the stalk, piled on the small plate of a rounded leaf. They are eaten by birds which may evacuate the seeds in another hedgerow. But unlike Holly (page 237) the seedlings can only grow where there is sufficient light; Honeysuckle wants to come into the bright light of day. The shrub extends outwards and upwards. Propagation also occurs by means of adventitious roots. These grow from any stems which fall back to touch the earth—a form of growth characteristic of the common Blackberry, *Rubus fructicosus,* which, while not a Bach flower, shares many gestural characteristics with Honeysuckle. Of the Bach flowers, Willow and Mimulus also form adventitious roots (pages 54 and no). The positive statement in each case includes a willingness to come into the present and take up life opportunities as they occur. Putting it to the negative, with Mimulus one is held back by fear of the future; with Willow resentment holds a person back because of difficult experiences; with Honeysuckle a desire for dreams and memories leads to living in the past. As the stems travel over the ground a new plant, separating from the parent, can take root and grow upwards.

Lonicera caprifolium is not a British native. Of those

authorities who list it, most say that it is a denizen of the Mediterranean and rare or very rare in Britain. (The common honeysuckle, *L. periclymenum,* is found throughout Britain and northwest Europe). So how and when did Bach come upon Honeysuckle; where did he first find it and make the mother essence? Henslow, in *British Wild Flowers,* said that it had been found in woods in Oxfordshire' though a recent *Flora of Oxfordshire* lists it as 'rare', found only at Goring and Mapledurham. It is known that Dr Bach planted some slips of Honeysuckle in the front garden at *Mount Vernon,* where it still grows today. It is wishful thinking to suppose that there is some virtue in this individual plant not found in others. It is the gesture of the plant which is important, not the fact that Dr B. had his hand upon it. In *The Twelve Healers & Other Remedies* he gave the following description for Honeysuckle:

Wild Rose

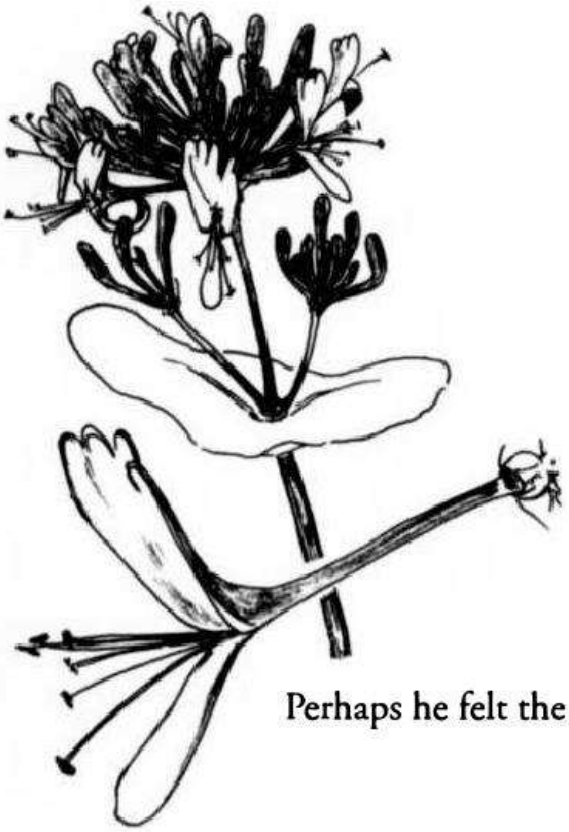
Those who live much in the past, perhaps a time ofgreat happiness, or memories of a lost friend, or ambitions which have not come true. They do not expect further happiness such as they have had.

18 • Apathy, Depression and Despair

LITTLE BRIAR ROSE IS A STORY told by the Brothers Grimm.' It was popularized by Walt Disney as the cartoon *Sleeping Beauty.* The story is well known: everybody remembers the princess who is cursed to prick her finger on a spindle, how the king ordered every spindle in the land to be burned, then the fateful day when the princess climbs a tower and sees an old woman busy spinning flax. Curious to try to spin herself, the princess no sooner touches the spindle than the magic decree of the thirteenth wise woman (in some versions a fairy, in others a wicked witch) is fulfilled and everyone in the palace falls into a deep sleep which lasts one hundred years. Around the castle a thick hedge of thorns grows up. The story of the sleeping princess 'Briar Rose' encourages many princes to attempt rescue but they die, impaled on the thorns. At

last, one prince comes to the hedge and finding it in flower he succeeds in passing through. And when he kisses Briar Rose, of course, all reawaken; the couple marry and live happily ever after.

The story can be read in different ways and its symbolism disputed. Going up into a tower may indicate a higher level of consciousness. The act of spinning could symbolize thinking or mental awareness, but more especially making those connections



Perhaps he felt the little Oxfordshire cottage needed it.

which are the threads of meaning in life. A pricked finger might suggest menarche or intercourse to some, a loss of innocence, or an action which wounds, linked to the will—to be pricked by a spindle means this wilful action somehow breaks the thread of life. Falling asleep means gliding through life, taking it as it is, without any effort to improve things (Bach's indication for Wild Rose). The coming of the princes, impaled upon thorns, may show the repeated attempts to achieve reunification of the soul or self through the union of male and female. This is done over many lifetimes during the hundred years. The kiss which awakens Briar Rose leads to a deeper joy in life and rebirth in the lost kingdom of nature. All depends upon how the tale is interpreted. But there is a link here to

the symbolism and gesture of the Wild Rose, which Dr Bach chose as remedy for those who become apathetic and allow their will to fall asleep.

Wild Rose

Eglantina

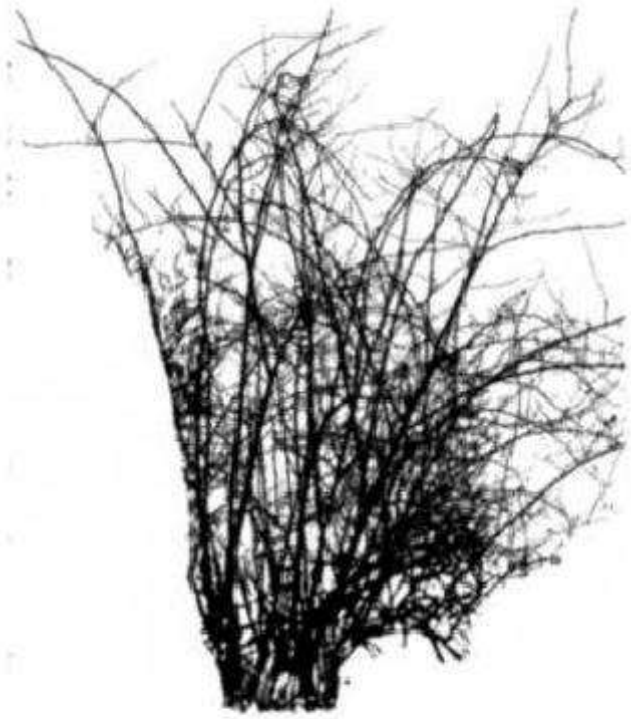
This association between Briar Rose and spinning is reinforced in a curious way by an engraving dating from 1847 by the French caricaturist J. J. Grandville (1803-1847). He illustrated a book, *Les*

Fleurs Animées, with flowers in human form. The brief story accompanying the illustrations explains how flowers have tired of their settled life in nature and beg the Flower Fairy to allow them to experience human qualities. For thousands of years, say the flowers, we have supplied mankind with their themes of comparison, metaphors and language of poetry. In return 'men lend to us their virtues and their vices, their good and bad qualities, and it is time we had some experience of what these are'. Eglantina, Wild Rose, will become a literary lady. But Grandville's illustration shows her in a moody pose, carrying carding combs, her wrists bound by entwined stems, so that she either cannot, or does not wish to use them. Carding wool is a preliminary to spinning; both were undertaken as a matter of routine by women in traditional communities who would spin as they walked. So carding combs are symbolic of being occupied with productive work; spinning with the hands or spinning with the mind. 'Nothing is made without carding and spinning,' Eglantina seems to say, 'and I am tired of doing it. I can no longer be bothered!' She is a perfect picture of arrested process which characterizes the Wild Rose state:

Those who without apparently sufficient reason become resigned to all that happens, and just glide through life, take it as it is, without any effort to improve things and find some joy. They have surrendered to the struggle of lift without complaint.

Remember that this emotional state, as with others of the Second Nineteen, is the result of some life trauma or changed circumstances. The key words are resignation and surrender.

Wild Rose, *Rosa canina,* can be either white or rose pink: shades of both Clematis and Honeysuckle. And the same gesture is there in the stems which, although they start off energetically, thrusting up vertically, when free of support curve over and turn back towards the earth (Clematis pages 47-8, Honeysuckle page 264). Roses put out new growth in August and September, at the end of the summer, and so leave it late in the year (like Gentian, page I28). These gracefully arching stems, fresh green and flexible, are an echo of spring. The thorns, which are a bright, flesh- pink when young, act as hooks, helping the plant to gain stability. This is important, because the long stems would otherwise be blown



Wild Rose

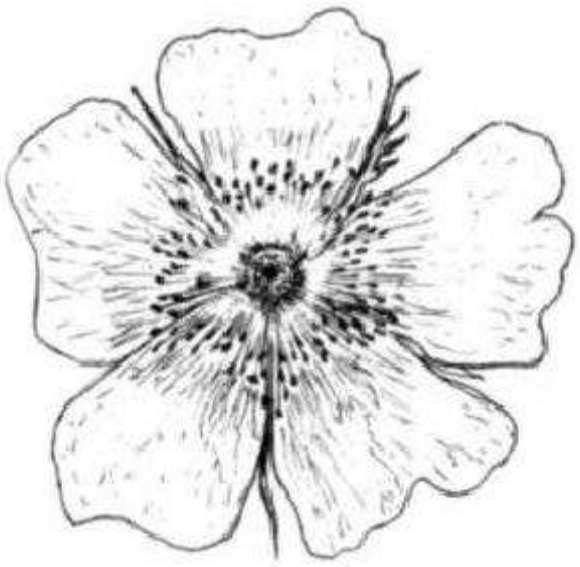
about by the wind, damaging the plant. When a person becomes 'resigned to all that happens' they are indeed blown as the wind wills, without structure or direction of their own. Hiding in the hedge, Wild Rose usually gains support from others.

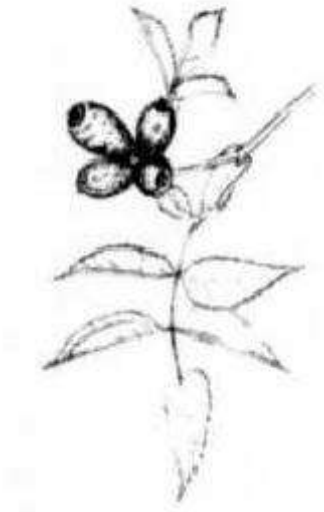
The hooks or thorns are fiercely prominent and extremely sharp. Approach Wild Rose and you will never escape without a scratch; blood will be drawn. Here we see again the image of forceful stimulus found in Gorse (pages 146-7) which will jab at apathy and weak will. The thorns are curved downwards, shaped like a canine tooth (hence *Rosa canina)* and they share the tooth's ripping and tearing disposition. In the converse of the Wild Rose state a person takes hold and will not let go; with terrier-like determination they keep working at a problem until it is solved.

Rosa canina is also known as Dog Rose though it is also supposed that Dog derives from *dague,* Old French for dagger. The sharpness of the prickles is followed by the jagged edge of the leaves. The surface of the leaf is smooth, without hairs to indicate sensitivity to the environment around.

The simple five-petalled flowers are the largest in the Bach range: up to fifty millimetres across. The central

part of the flower is filled with golden-yellow stamens, a star burst of strength. The petals open as a flattened dish, as if to absorb all possible light, like a satellite receiver searching for signals and stimulus. While Rock Rose opens in a similar way, lying back to face the sun, Wild Rose faces out in all directions. The remedy is more concerned with activities of life on earth and human participation (or the lack of it). Compare the floral gesture of Wild Rose with that of Oak (page 154). Oak is powerfully-structured, with very small, hidden flowers; the emotional state is determined and represents a fully-engaged, even over-active will force. The same idea is expressed in the small flowers of Vervain. By contrast, the large, flamboyant rose with itsloose plant structure illustrates lack of will and lack of clear determination. Dr Bach pointed towards this as he grouped Cerato, Clematis and Scleranthus opposite Honeysuckle and Wild Rose (page 2.8o); all have the same unstructured form and a similar confused mentality.

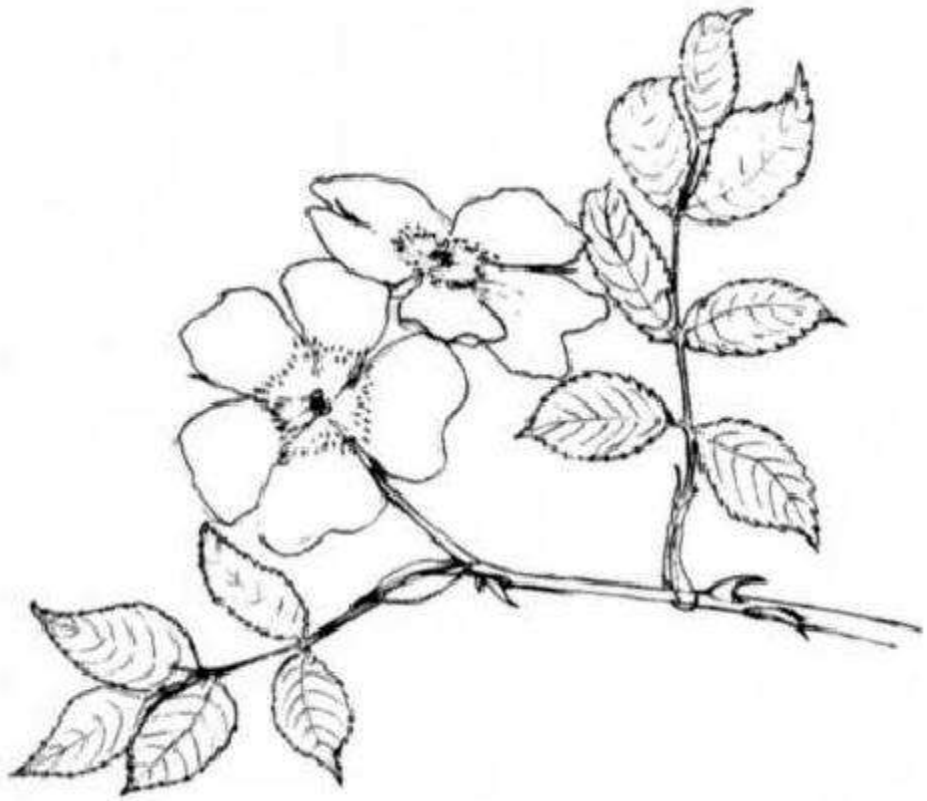




Red rosehips contain high concentrations of vitamin c, important for strength and health. Those who suffer the Wild Rose lassitude and mental fatigue would find physical stimulus and refreshment from

rosehip tea or syrup. Little hairs cushion the seeds within the hip and these provided playful children with itching powders in the days before television eroded interest in the natural world. The irritant effect of these hairs echoes the prickling of the thorns. Like the stinging nettle *(Urtica urens),* Wild Rose stimulates a physical response. Indeed, there is a link between nettle and rose; both are markers of human settlement. In Scotland, where many crofters were dispossessed of their land and homes during the Highland Clearances, tumble-down ruins can still be found where people lived 15o years ago. They are marked by Wild Rose and nettles. Nettles grow wherever urine has fouled the ground and Wild Rose where human endeavour has been defeated by time and troubles (like Gorse).

Roses are said to be long-lived. At Hildesheim, near Hanover in Germany, there was and may still be a Wild Rose more than a thousand years old.[6] Time certainly plays a part in the nature of the plant: we can see this in germination. *Rosa canina* seeds have a low viability, often below thirty per cent, even in nursery conditions. There is little inclination to take up the opportunity of life. Tests have shown a noticeable delay in germination until the second year, indicating a slow response, a lack of effort, delayed reaction. Two other plants in the Bach range share this feature of delayed germination: Hornbeam' and Mustard. Hornbeam, like Wild Rose, waits until the second spring before the seed breaks open and develops; both display a similar apathy and weariness. Mustard seeds can wait, buried in the earth, for many years before they germinate. The Mustard emotional state develops through lack of interest in life and a will-less emptiness (accidie—???—acedia).



Mustard

Mustard

The key to understanding Mustard, as a Bach flower remedy, is given in an observation by Johns in his *Flowers of the Field:* 'a common weed in cornfields, sometimes springing up in profusion from recently disturbed ground, though previously unknown there'.

It is not uncommon for wild plants to appear suddenly but Mustard can swamp a field of corn with yellow flowers among the green stalks, like the red poppies which used to be seen in ripening wheat or barley—an unexpected invasion. It is like the sudden and unexplained onset of depression or despair which Bach described for this remedy:

Those who are liable to times of gloom, or even despair, as though a cold dark cloud overshadowedthem and hid the light and the joy of lift. It may not be possible to give any reason or explanationfor such attacks.

The farmer ploughs a field, plants seeds and, as they germinate and grow, weeds appear among the crop. These days such weeds are quickly eradicated, sprayed with chemicals as soon as they appear, but in the 1930s they were a common sight. Charlock, or wild Mustard as it is also known, was a real nuisance—'probably the most troublesome of all annual weeds of arable land'." It competes for light and air by overgrowing other plants, more or less smothering them; harvests may be reduced by as much as fifty per cent." It also takes nutrients from the soil and harbours pests like turnip fly and gall weevil. No wonder farmers wanted to be rid of it.

Bach first saw Mustard growing in the Sotwell area in the early summer. He sent some of the flowers to The Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, asking for identification (his letter dated May nth 1935). They replied that the specimens were probably *Brassica (sinapis) arvensis* a flower which reaches full flowering in early June. (`June is the month in which ordinarily it is most abundant'). So his first sight was of weeds growing among the corn (like biblical tares) but not yet fully in flower. Perhaps he even had a conversation with the farmer and so learned about the unusual life cycle of *Sinapis arvensis.* Writing in 1852 about *The Weeds of Agriculture,* George Sinclair, gardener to the Duke of Bedford, commented:

It is well known that the seeds of charlock, poppy and camomile, lie for ages in the bowels of the earth uninjured; and it is only when brought near the surface, that they can be made to vegetate, and then only under peculiar circumstances of the surface

soil in which they lie. It has long been observed, that the prevalence of charlock and poppies occur periodically. In one year every field will have an abundant share of one or both these weeds: and it sometimes happens, that for ten years at a stretch, neither will appear in injurious quantity. Hence the old saying, 'it is a charlock year'.

What actually controls the appearance of *Sinapis arvensis* has more to do with the depth of ploughing. If the blade of the plough should pull deep, soil carrying old Mustard seeds will be brought to the surface. Evidence of this may sometimes be seen when panels of Charlock appear in a field, as the set of the plough has changed. A single plant may carry 4,000 seeds, so that millions may lie buried, a seed bank waiting for an opportunity to surface.

As an emotional state, Mustard is a kind of depression which waits, unseen, for an opportunity to surface. Its origins will have been in the past, buried deeply, even beyond memory. By looking at the natural history of the plant, two things can be seen. One, the darkness which clouds the `light and joy of life' comes from within the earth; it is born of past experiences (karma if you will) which the individual carries as unresolved material, ungerminated seeds. To use another analogy, it is like the psychological baggage many carry, filled with who knows what. The second point: Mustard plants only develop when a field is left empty, the soil bare. The Mustard state follows disturbance of the settled pattern of life (ploughing) and only takes root in the mind because there is some inactivity in the will (an empty field). That is why Mustard is alongside Honeysuckle and Wild Rose in the sequence of discovery—Nora Weeks put Mustard there and so did Bach, in the group for *Not Sufficient Interest in Present Circumstances.*

So Mustard is an opportunist pattern of interference, a form of possession, which takes up residence only because of the weakness of the host. This idea is hinted at by some writers who speak of dark forces overshadowing the soul, of separation and a fall from grace.' The image of an empty, ploughed field (or even upturned earth) invites such thoughts. There is something unnatural about land devoid of all plants. Today, when farmers spray fields with

weed-killer, before planting and ploughing, there is cause to wonder about the effect on the psyche of the planet. Eradicate all plants from a field and what will enter? The psyche of the planet may be too abstruse a concept, but the complex relationships of plant to earth, of biodiversity and subtlety in thought are the very things forced under by the bulldozer of materialism. The farmer increases his yield at harvest by removing unwanted competition from weeds: charlock hardly grows in arable land today. But does its extinction as a species leave us less protected from the 'cold, dark clouds' of depression?

Mustard can germinate after autumn ploughing, although it may not survive the winter; more usually it appears with spring. When it grew in cornfields (European cereal crops, not American sweet corn) it was just slightly taller than wheat or barley, about seventy-five centimetres, taking shelter from other plants. These days it is more commonly seen on roadside verges and embankments where repairs and earthworks have disturbed the ground. Leaves and stems are rough, bristling with stiff hairs

(hispid)—like the stinging nettle, but without the irritant poison. The seeds though, when eaten, are stimulating, hot and tangy: *sinapis* is derived from the Greek word for mustard. The leaves are irregularly lobed; these plants lack symmetry and balance. The flowers however, are cruciform: four brilliant yellow petals on short stalks cluster near the top of the stem. The intense yellow of the massed flowers makes for a clear brightness which dispels gloom, like sun breaking through clouds, enlivening the earth. This is the action of the remedy; it dispels gloom. But it does so by helping the person to understand and come to terms with the problem. Katz and Kaminski make the point that in the Mustard state 'the consciousness finds it difficult to penetrate to the cause or meaning of such depression's the yellow flowers link to clear mental energy, which can help this understanding.

When afflicted by the Mustard state 'it is almost impossible to appear happy or cheerful', said Bach. So Mustard can be used whenever a person appears depressed but for no clear reason: hence the oft-quoted Gentian for known cause and Mustard for unknown. True enough, but the Mustard depression derives from a clear source when we can find it. Something is there which actively invades or attacks the consciousness of the person. Bach spoke of a lack of 'explanation for such attacks ...'.2' Like Aspen (page 195),

Mustard depression is based upon the action of unseen forces which manipulate the psyche of an individual.

Each of the previous emotional states has its difficulty; each represents a particular pain or problem to overcome. Combine the worst of all of them, amplifying the feeling to a great intensity, and we arrive at the last of the Thirty-eight Bach flower remedies: Sweet Chestnut. There can be no doubt Edward Bach himself felt great anguish. Nobody could describe it so succinctly without knowing the experience:

Sweet Chestnut

... when the anguish is so great as to seem to be unbearable. When the mind or body feels as if it had borne to the uttermost limit of its endurance, and that now it must give way.

Nora Weeks mentioned that Bach suffered from a 'virulent rash which burned and irritated incessantly' throughout June and July (page 229) but that was a small, outward, physical symptom of the mental and spiritual distress with which he was struggling. The Sweet Chestnut state, he wrote, is for 'when it seems there is nothing but destruction and annihilation left to face." The very light of life has been extinguished: it has been called the dark night of the soul.*

Many of the remedy plants have been described in terms of light (all plant life works to mediate light on earth), and the theme of. darkness and light most strongly characterizes this remedy. There is something subterranean about the Sweet Chestnut state, a depth of feeling like the oppression of mines where sunlight never enters. Yet, even in the darkest labyrinth a luminous thread of meaning still guides the soul; here that thread is lost. The point has been made that overcoming difficulties leads to the evolution of soul qualities (page am.) and that remedies of the Second Nineteen are concerned with this process of turning suffering into learning.

Also that the boiling method, using fire from within the earth, speaks of this transformation. So here, with the last of the boiling remedies, there is a final darkening of the light as soul-flame certainties are extinguished by materiality and suffocation of the spirit. Bach wrote that 'it is one for that terrible, that appalling mental despair when it seems the very soul itself is suffering destruction'. This calls for the most powerful expression of light and regeneration in the plant kingdom, to pull consciousness up from the darkness of this underworld.

Chestnut of One Hundred Horses

The Sweet Chestnut tree, *Castanea sativa,* is among the mightiest of species. In winter the tree is a picture of huge, spiralling forces, upthrust energy in trunk and bough. A single tree can be eight metres in girth, like the one beside the river Grwyne

Fawr, above Glangrwyney, between Abergavenny and Crickhowell. Five or six people are needed to link hands and encircle such a trunk. Others are recorded as being far bigger: *Castagno del Cento Cavalli* (Chestnut of One Hundred Horses) on the west side of Mount Etna, in Italy, was said to be more than fifty metres in circumference, although quite hollow. An estimate of its age? 3,000 or 3,500 years old! British Chestnuts rarely live beyond 500 years, although the ancient giant at Tortworth in Gloucestershire is estimated to be 1,100. Sweet Chestnut is a native of the Mediterranean and once formed great forests: a remnant can be seen on the western slopes of Mount Ochi, on the Greek island of Evia. It survives such dry conditions with a massive and deeply penetrating root structure. Johns remarked that the tree loves volcanic soil, which reinforces the idea that subterranean fire is resonant with the Sweet Chestnut condition.

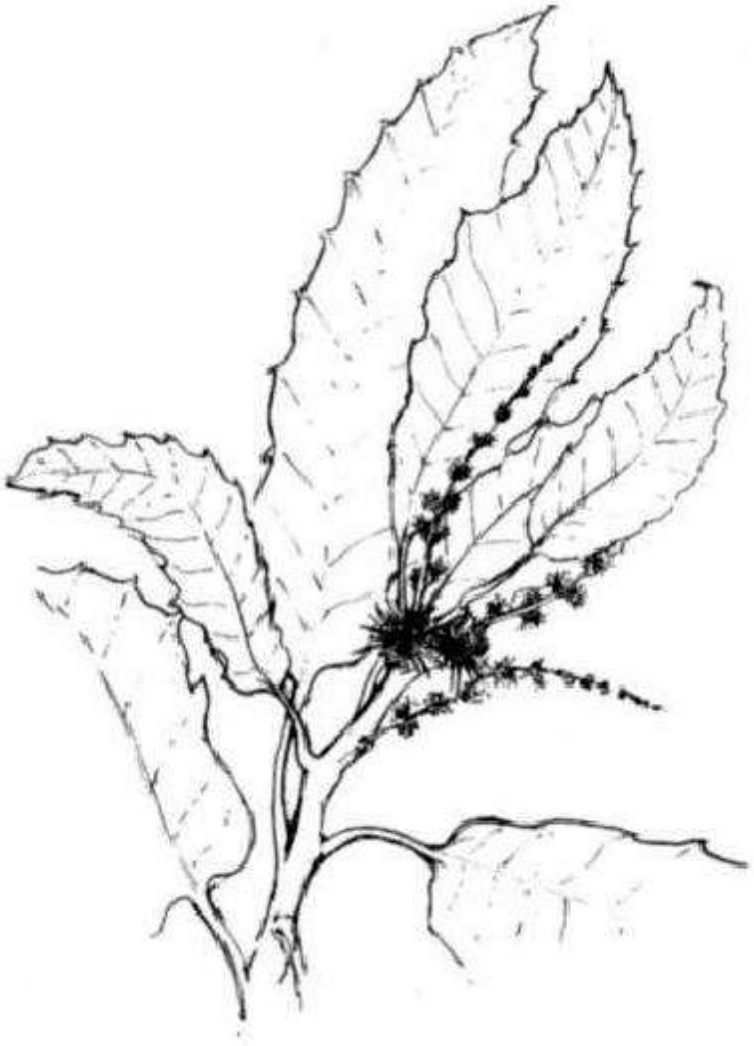
The bark is characteristically furrowed, deeply etched with force lines running parallel to each other like ribbons, which seem to draw strength upwards from the earth. These begin to open out and spiral around the tree when it is about Ex) years old. Younger branches have a smooth, grey skin, like young Olive trees (page 175). Like Olive, the Sweet Chestnut has a great capacity for regrowth from the ground up, so that a coppiced tree will send up many young shoots. This may have accounted for the massive girth of *Castagno del Cento Cavallo* since trunks can fuse together if they make contact. The single bole of a tree is rarely more than twenty-five metres high but it stands powerfully, like a pillar. Branches often grow out horizontally and are liable to be torn from the trunk by the wind, weighted against the foliage. Old trees stand shattered and broken.

The leaves are large, simple and deeply notched, rather like Impatiens (page 43); the energy clear and directed. Smooth and glossy, they have a strong skeletal form which holds them stiffly in a rosette at the end of the branches. They are never attacked by insects. The male flowers grow from the axil of the leaf, pushing out away from the dark foliage, as long plumes, creamy white with pollen. The scent is variously said to be sickly or unmistakeably smelling of semen. The catkins, unusually, are erect, in contrast to the downward drooping Aspens (page 196) which point to earth. Sweet Chestnut flowers are an explosion of fire, like rocket trails bursting into space. The surge of energy from the root, up the trunk, out along the branches into the leaves and flowers is a blast of power, lifting against gravity, shooting towards the stars.

Female flowers are sited at the base of the male catkins; they are small, green and spiky. After pollination they swell to produce nuts enclosed in a bristly case which falls from the tree in autumn. The sharp spines, as with Gorse leaves, are more a sign of stimulus than any kind of protection for the tree or its fruit. Since flowering never begins before July, the growth of

these nuts must be very rapid if they are to be viable seeds in Britain. Further south they flower earlier, grow fatter and the edible nuts are gathered for food. In all cases they germinate easily. Along with the faculty to regrow from the root up after coppicing, this is a sign of the vitality of the tree.

Making the mother essence, by the boiling method, is an extraordinary experience. The tree, so vast, is covered in flowers, from top to bottom. Only where a lowered branch reaches towards earth can they be picked. Then, pluck one of these creamy-headed creatures from the branch, with its spray of leaves and catkins, and the saucepan is already full and overflowing. Nora Weeks says, sweetly, 'gather about six inches of the twig with leaves, male and female flowers from as many trees as possible'," but this may not be practicable. . . . It is not a problem, however, it just illustrates again the immense vitality and exuberance of this remedy flower. When the essence has been made it is dark, reddish-brown, like mahogany—the taste sharp and stimulating, awakening. But the feeling it produces is gentle, a golden glow in the heart. Dr Bach said 'the cry for help is heard … After the dark night, the sun rising.

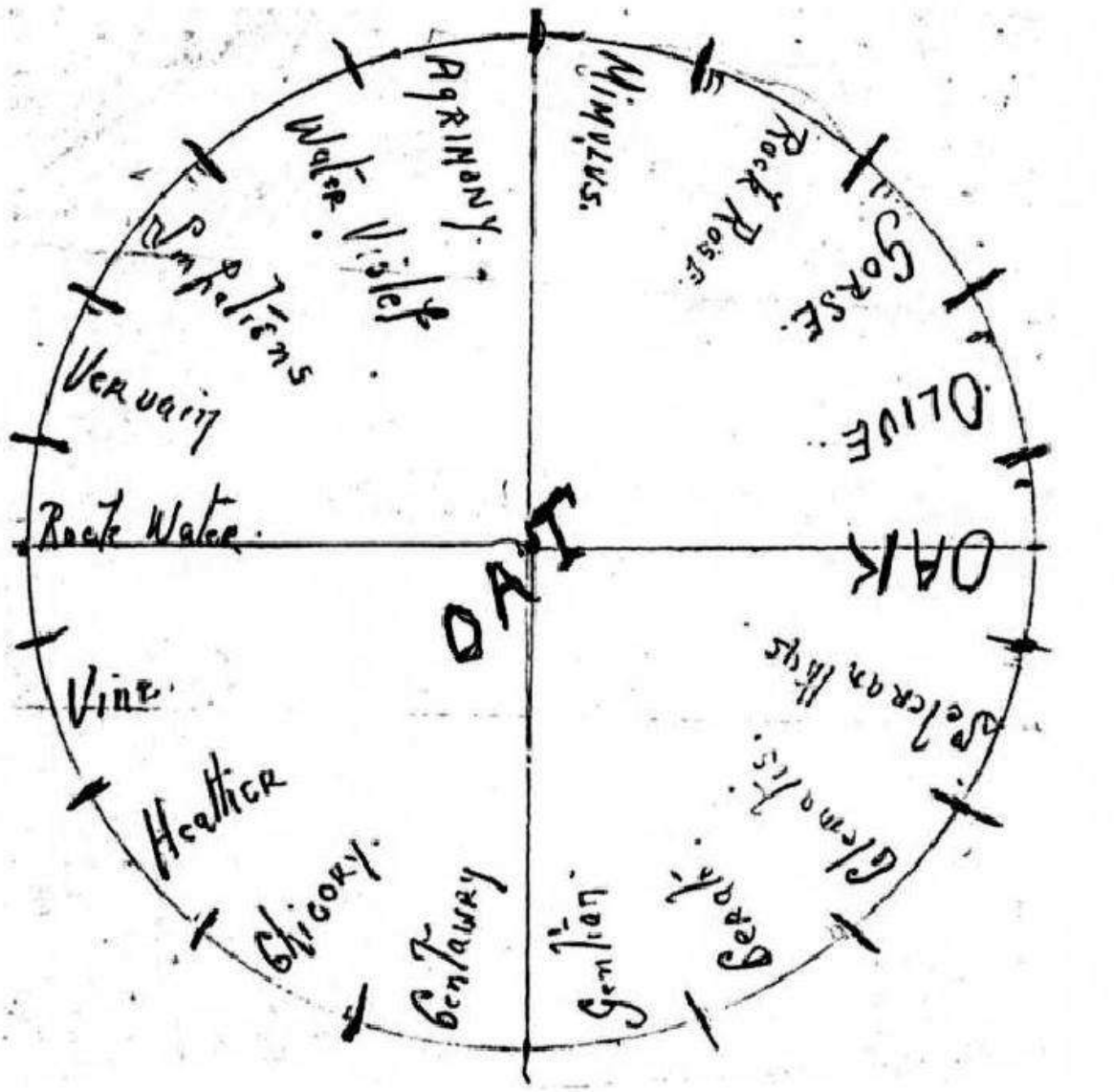


19 • The Pattern in Practice

WITH THE DISCOVERY OF SWEET CHESTNUT Bach's work was almost done: the sequence of Thirty-eight remedies was complete. Nothing remained but finalizing the descriptions and reprinting *The Twelve Healers.* Bach had begun to use the new remedies immediately, of course, and exchanged letters with colleagues who also reported their findings. 'What a splendid case of Aspen', he wrote in a letter to 'Dear Brother Doctor Wheeler', dated September 1935.[1] He continued: 'the more we use these remedies, both the new nineteen and the old nineteen, the more wonderful the results . . .'. Bach also began to explore the possibilities for organizing the remedies into some formal scheme. 'I have not yet quite thought out the table you sent, but hoping to let you have a reply about this quite shortly', he added as a postscript.' What table? What was he referring to?

In 1934 Bach had drawn a diagram with Oat at the centre of a circle, eighteeen of the other remedies around the circumference. Done at the time when there were just nineteen remedies, it was

designed to explore relationships. Wild Oat is in the central position as if to ask the question—which direction should be taken? Was it a diagram used for dowsing? It is interesting to study such schemes but they are inevitably sterile unless the pattern works in practice.

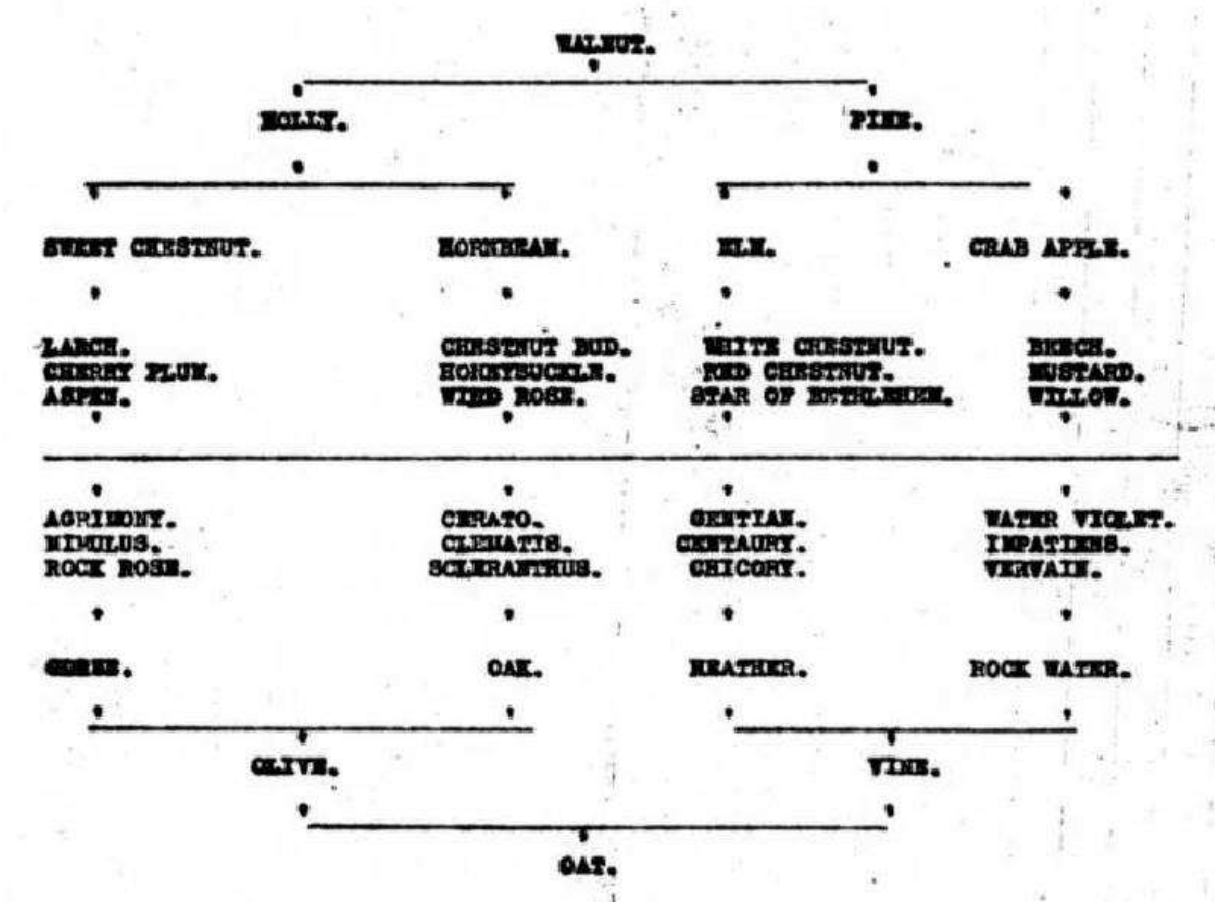


To place Mimulus opposite Centaury or Chicory next to Heather does little to assist diagnosis.

Later, when the full Thirty-eight remedies had been discovered, Bach set them out as if cohorts in a battle plan. Oat was opposite Walnut, Olive leading to Gorse and Oak. He was attempting to fit the remedies together, the Seven Helpers with the

Twelve Healers, the Second Nineteen with the First. In a letter, written July 1st 1935, Bach wrote:

The prescription of these new remedies is going to be much more simple than at first appeared, because each of them corresponds to one of the Twelve Healers or the Seven Helpers. For example: supposing a case is definitely Clematis and does fairly well but not a complete cure, give the corresponding new remedy further to help the cure.



Crucially, he did not leave us with the full information as to how and why the new remedies corresponded with the old. 'Enclosed a list of those already worked out,' he wrote in the same letter, 'the rest we shall receive in due time.' In some cases the connection is obvious, as with Honeysuckle and Clematis. Cherry Plum links to Rock Rose, Aspen to Mimulus. But it is not equally clear which of the boiling remedies follows on from Water Violet or Impatiens. Arguments could be put forward but they lack clarity

and falter. If the scheme had been useful it would have been written about before now.

In the end Bach settled for seven groups, allocating each of the Thirty-eight to one of them. Mimulus, Rock Rose, Aspen, Red Chestnut and Cherry Plum all worked with fear, so the first group was *'For Fear'*. Impatiens, Water Violet and Heather each concerned loneliness: so another group was *'For Loneliness'*. And so on for all of the Thirty-eight. The 'Seven Headings', as Bach called them, were written into the 1936 edition of *The Twelve Healers & Other Remedies* and have been used ever since. The only problem is that they too fail to work in practice. The seven headings look good on paper but do not lend themselves to practical application of the remedies. The idea behind the seven headings, undoubtedly, was to make it easier for people to understand the remedies. It was too complex to consider thirty-eight different states without some structure and order. An alphabetic listing from Agrimony to Willow was arbitrary and did nothing to guide the user. The problem still applies to someone coming new to the subject today, reading a book or leaflet. All the remedies are given equal weight and no differentiation. At least the seven groups offered a starting point. They are:

For fear

For uncertainty

For insufficient interest in present circumstances

For loneliness

For those oversensitive to influences and ideas

For despondency and despair

For over-care for the welfare of others

But how can a person be sure of the difference between uncertainty and lack of interest in present circumstances? Those who know Bach remedies well can point the distinction but it is one made by the remedies themselves and not by a clear meaning of the

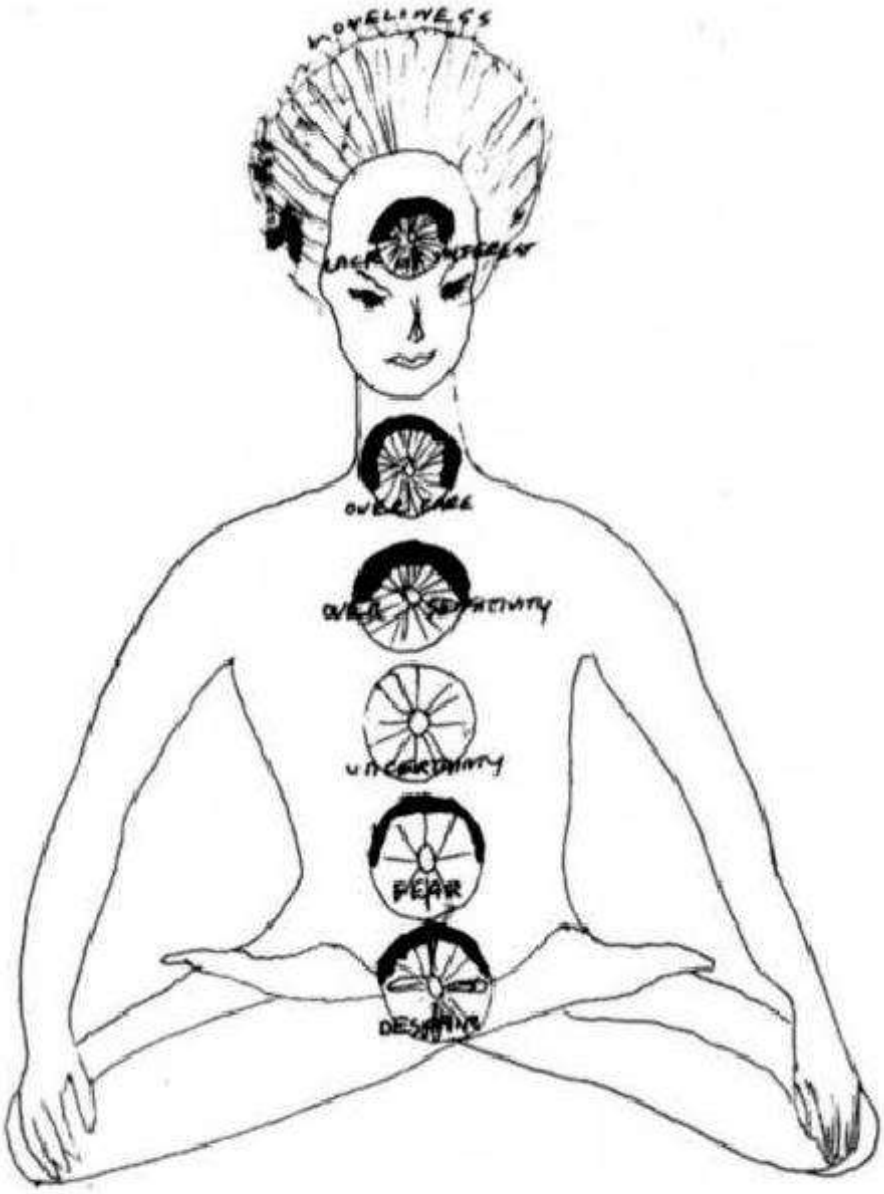
headings. A Mimulus person could be described as oversensitive (nervous, shy, reactive); someone in a Gorse state (depressed and hopeless) might be seen as despondent and in despair, yet they are not placed in those groups. A lack of interest in present circumstances sounds like a good phrase to describe someone with the Hornbeam feeling though Bach put Hornbeam in the group for uncertainty. It can be confusing.

It seems likely that Bach based his seven headings on the seven chakras or energy centres of the body. These would correspond with the 'seven principles' or archetypes he had written about in *Some Fundamental Considerations . . .*[5] in 193o (page 89). In this scheme, by way of example, the loneliness remedies (Impatiens, Water Violet and Heather) correspond to the crown chakra (located by the pineal gland at the crown of the head) and the seventh principle, Spiritual Perfection. This type, he said, worked with the characteristics of the enthusiast, the puritan and the monk. All very well, but too intellectual for everyday use.

There is a similar problem with astrology. In the first edition of *The Twelve Healers* Dr Bach began finding correspondences between the twelve remedies and the twelve astrological signs:

These types of personality are indicated to us by the moon according to which sign of the Zodiac sheis in at birth . . . . The secret of life is to be true to our personality, not to suffer interference from outside influences. Our personality we learn from the position of the moon at birth; our dangers of interference from the planets.

But later he wrote 'I am being cautious as regards astrology and that is why one left out the signs and the months in the first Twelve Healers'.? Although he examined 'the exact placing of signs and planets and bodily systems', it lacked certainty.' Furthermore, however useful astrology may be to an astrologer, it complicated the simplicity of the remedies .[9] Bach wanted to 'give general principles whereby people like you who have a more detailed knowledge, may discover a great truth'.'° The remedies themselves must be open to serve all interests and not become narrowed by arcane or esoteric specialism.

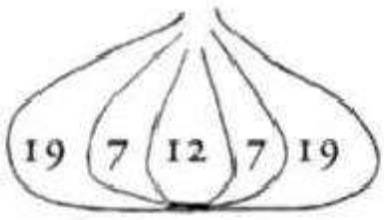


The seven chakras and seven groups

Clearly there was a tension here between what Bach knew about astrology, chakras, and the spiritual path and what he could reasonably expect others to know and understand. Having already alienated his medical colleagues with metaphysics (page 79), he tried to avoid further complications. Shortly before he died Bach rewrote the introduction to *The Twelve Healers 6. Other Remedies,* eschewing all unnecessary science, theories or knowledge 'apart from the simple methods described herein'." He concluded 'there is little more to say, for the understanding mind will know all this . .

.'. In other words—make of it what you can.

Yet there is a way in which the Thirty-eight Bach remedies can be presented straightforwardly so that anybody may make sense of them and appreciate the different qualities. It is the schema used for this book—the schema used by Bach himself in the unfolding story of their discovery. It is the system of 12 : 7: 19, the Twelve Healers, the Seven Helpers and the Second Nineteen. The Twelve Healers are the twelve soul types, the type remedies; the particular nature with which we are born (pages 139-142). The Seven Helpers are chronic conditions, emotional states which have developed over time, which have become habitual and which may mask the true type. The Second Nineteen are reactive emotional and mental conditions which can occur as a response to life traumas. They may be long-lasting and deep-acting but can be traced back to a particular event which triggered the reaction. An understanding of these kinds of remedy is supported by an understanding of the difference between the two methods of preparation: the sun method and the boiling method.



Because the First Twelve remedies are closer to the beginning of this life they are not always apparent at first glance. They may be overlaid by complexity and the distortions of experience: the Seven Helpers and the Second Nineteen. Those who are closer to their origins, the more innocent, may more readily show their type as one of the First Twelve—children, animals, souls who have resolved or never encountered life problems. Those who have travelled further from home may have disguised their true feelings. For this reason the image is sometimes used of peeling back the layers of an onion, revealing progressive levels of emotional experience. A good image and one which probably came from Bach. The power of the idea can be properly appreciated if the onion's layers are 12 : 7:19.

The core of a personality, therefore, is the type remedy. Dr Bach was an Impatiens, Nora Weeks probably a Water Violet. It shows the motivation for the life. In the Seven Helpers are seven

ways in which an individual may mediate with life. These remedies are not invariably appropriate but one of the seven often shows the habitual approach: Vine is controlling, Wild Oat diffused, Oak full of endeavour. The outer layer shows the remedy states closest to the surface, the visible trauma of Star, the anger of Holly, the apathy of Wild Rose, the resentment of Willow. Take drops of a remedy from the Second Nineteen and the underlying chronic condition may be revealed. That in turn can lead to the type remedy. Where there is immediate trauma and obvious distress it is no good speaking of soul lessons: first repair the car and then see about completing the journey.

This suggests the Second Nineteen are easier to recognize than the soul types. They are likely to be the presenting emotional states, those nearest to the surface. They are the remedies which are used most widely—those which sell most"- Most popular is Walnut, then Larch, White Chestnut, Crab Apple and Star of Bethlehem. Mimulus and Impatiens top the chart of the Twelve Healers; Olive is the most popular of the Seven Helpers. Vine, Rock Water and Heather are the least used remedies: indicative of a need to better understand the Seven Helpers.

These seven remedies—Olive, Gorse, Oak, Vine, Heather, Rock Water, and Wild Oat—could be considered independently for the purposes of diagnosis, before turning attention to the type remedy. Bach made the distinction of whether 'the patient is pale' or 'high coloured', but gave no explanation." Better to look at the person overall and assess the state of vitality and their use of energy. Remember this is the chronic condition, a key pointer to the state of health.

The Twelve Healers can most easily be recognized when a person is unwell: we revert to type (pages 293-4). Or the soul lesson may be recognized by looking back to moments of crisis and trauma. Bach said, look at the virtues you admire or dislike in other people. It is equally possible to look at a formative event and consider the reaction to it. This may be something specific and personal or a more general event from childhood. In any case it is the characteristic behaviour of the individual which is significant. Often people say they react differently at different stages in their

life. But there is no contradiction in this. Water Violets are not likely to develop into Centaury types or Vervain into Cerato. If a Scleranthus type develops the character of Gentian, then Gentian has become the passing mood and should be treated as such. Bach wrote:

If in doubt between one or two, give both; they can be put into the same bottle. This also applies if the patient has two definite states present at the same time, such as fear and impatience. During an illness more than one state may be present, or one may follow another, then each stage should be treated as it occurs. In severe illness, there may be despair or fear; on recovery indifference or discouragement; during convalescence, impatience or weakness; and so on. In such cases each stage can be dealt with until it disappears and perfect health is regained.

It is part of the beauty of the Bach remedies, however, that no one way of working is right for all people. There is no need to be prescriptive about how to use them. There is a wonderful opportunity to explore new ways of working through a self-developmental approach to learning. But it comes back to Dr Bach's aphorism in chapter ten of *Free Thyself,* 'to gain freedom give freedom'.' [6] It is important to remember that this freedom is there only so long as it is not used to inhibit the freedom of others. The Bach flower remedies were given to the world and there need be no controls to limit their use.

People sometimes ask why it is that Edward Bach died at the relatively young age of fifty. If he invented these wonderful remedies, so the thought goes, could he not have healed himself and lived to be ninety and a wise old man? Matters of life and death are rarely in our hands, but in any event we can reply that Dr Bach died at the completion of his life work. The first of the remedies he found, Impatiens, was his own type remedy. Subsequently, he experienced the intensity of lifetimes in a deep-diving immersion in the gamut of human emotion and mental conditions. From loneliness to selfish passion, from hatred to despair, his journey moved through the stations of human soul life; he ended with the desolate anguish of Sweet Chestnut. At the same time he was physically far from strong and suffered debilitating illness

throughout his life. It is no wonder that he died at fifty. However, the question implies some judgement upon Bach by supposing that illness and death represent failure on his part. But that is to misunderstand an essential message of Dr Bach's remedies: opportunities afforded by life should be welcomed, no matter how difficult they may appear, no matter what the consequences.

There is an extension of this thought: there is more to be gained in overcoming difficulties than in never having faced a problem. There are those souls who appear to fall through life without friction, never meeting resistance. But what do they learn? Such a charmed existence does nothing for the evolution of consciousness; those who overcome achieve greatness. Each one who masters a soul lesson contributes to the building of a new world, 'exerting a continual pressure towards perfection'.'? Changing the habitual patterning of one of the Seven helps to realize the mightiness of our Destiny'. Overcoming the adversity of those states described by the Second Nineteen leads from darkness into light. But experience is brought from that darkness 'into the glorious sunshine of the knowledge of your Divinity'. So it was knowledge and experience which Bach gained from his short life. It was gained through the discovery of the Thirty-eight flower remedies. With that knowledge and experience he was able to make a map of the metaphysical world. It is a map which can be used by anyone, whatever his soul journey, whatever stage in life has been reached.

At the end, just weeks before he died, Bach wrote to his friends—'dear lovely people'—asking them to carry on the work he had started, 'a Work that can rob disease of its powers, the Work which can set men free'. In recent years this has appeared as just extravagance or, perhaps, the con fusion of a man close to death. But suppose it was true. Was he claiming great powers for the remedies he had discovered? In part, yes. He believed they were capable of helping people make great changes, such that they might loosen the stranglehold of disease. The real secret, however, was that transforming the life transformed the power of disease: it was this which 'can set men free'.

Today disease and death control us ever more strongly with a

litany of viruses, cancers and heart disorders. The causes may be vaccinations, environmental poisons, despoliation of food, or pollution of the elements—earth, water and air. For Bach the cause was clear and it is clear today:

It is only because we have forsaken Nature's way for man's way that we have suffered, and we have only to return to be released from our trials. In the presence of the way of Nature disease has no power; all fear, all depression, all hopelessness can be set aside. There is no disease of itself which is incurable.

It is a trumpet call to life.

Appendix I

The Story of the Travellers

Once upon a time nineteen travellers set out upon a journey . . . . That is the opening of the story which Bach told. To be accurate, he had sixteen travellers (he had only completed *The Twelve Healers 6- Four Helpers)* but that hardly matters.* In his tale, when they were lost deep in the forest at night, each of the travellers behaves according to type. Agrimony worries, Mimulus becomes afraid, Gorse gives up and thinks he will lie down and wait for death. Later, when they have safely found the path, they all show the positive strengths of their type: Mimulus knows no fear, Gorse tells of the sunrise in the morning. They go on to guide other travellers and are an example to those who have not made the journey before.

Although the story is conceived in the imagery of a fairy tale Bach did not develop the symbolism. All he wished to do was to show the remedy types relating to each other as a group and to illustrate the different ways in which each reacts to a common experience. It points towards a most useful tool for diagnosis. It is easy to see the different emotional reactions when we allow each person to tell their part in a story. In practical terms, this can be related to almost any mundane event. It might be going to town to get a haircut, to buy a new pair of shoes, or to complain about something, or what happens when we decide to go on holiday. How each of us deals with the situation will show how we take decisions, deal with a new experience or resolve difficulties. The remedies can

help us with our life problems.

To tell the story of the travellers today, the nineteen remedies could be placed in a new situation, no longer walking through the forest but still on a journey—they are in a minibus, going as a group for a visit. Vervain is the organizer and has done a good job keeping everybody informed of the arrangements by email but now Clematis has overslept. Impatiens does not think they should wait any longer; ten o'clock means ten o'clock, he says. He has threatened to go on ahead in his own car; tense and irritable, he wants to get started. But who is going to drive the bus? Oak will do it, let the others sit back and relax, enjoy the trip. Relax? How can anybody relax? Mimulus is worrying about the traffic on the motorway and the speed they will be driving at, he gets so frightened. Chicory is feeling sick and has a headache and wants everybody to wait while Centaury is instructed to go to the shop to get some more tablets. Olive sits patiently in the bus, pale and exhausted. Scleranthus sits first at the front, then at the back and then at the front again. Water Violet watches the performance with disdainful amusement having chosen the only single seat available. At last Clematis arrives and after a telling off from Vine gets on board, takes out a CD player, dons headphones and listens to music.

`Where are we going?' Wild Oat wants to know. 'Who cares,' says Agrimony with a laugh, 'so long as there's a pub.' Rock Water looks disapproving and goes back to reading *The Twelve Principles of Perfection.* 'We are scheduled to visit a beautiful garden,' Gentian explains, 'though we probably won't make it,' he adds gloomily. Just at that moment there is a bang, smoke pours from the engine and the bus grinds to a halt. Gentian shakes his head. 'Typical,' he says to himself, `just my luck.' Wide-eyed with fear, Rock Rose begins to panic. But Vine is already on his feet shouting for everybody to stay calm. Gorse, slumped in his seat, does not seem to have noticed what has happened. What will they do now, asks Cerato?

Vervain soon has things organized with the breakdown service and mentally has written the first of several strongly-worded letters to the hire company. While the engine is repaired the group must stay the night in a nearby hotel and this unexpected event seems to

bring out the worst in everybody; only Heather seems happy and spends the time telling his life story to the receptionist. The rest of the party are arguing or in tears. Water Violet has gone up to his room and left them to it. It looks as though things cannot get any worse.

The next day Gentian wants to give up and go home, there seems little point in persevering. Gorse agrees. But little Rock Rose, taking courage in both hands says that they really must try to keep going and get to the garden; if everybody made a big effort to be positive then they can still manage it. Chicory is about to say that he has been making an effort all along but a look from Vine silences him. But, even if they are willing to try, how will they find the garden? Cerato wants to know. Should they just go around asking? At this point Water Violet steps forward, he can show them the way, since he has been there before.

So they set out again, trying to encourage each other all the while. Vine works hard to help the group and plans gently to tell Centaury that he does not need to be carrying everybody's cases: but Centaury is deep in conversation with Mimulus and just quietly smiles at Vine. Rock Rose has confidently asked Vervain for the roadmap and is asking Water Violet about the route while Vervain listens to them attentively. Gentian feels sure that they will make good time now. Chicory has stopped worrying about himself and is caring for Olive. Gorse looks out brightly at the passing fields and is making plans, Oak has let Scleranthus drive and is sitting with his feet up playing cards with Rock Water (who has forgotten to criticize). Wild Oat is happily writing a story about what has happened. Clematis has lent his music to Impatiens who is relaxing now, while Clematis looks around enjoying the present moment. Agrimony and Heather are sitting in silence, holding hands. And Cerato goes to sit next to Water Violet. They discuss the changed mood which has come about.

The road they have taken leads them at last to a car park beside a river. One at a time they walk across the nearby bridge. Impatiens is the first to cross, of course, and finds himself on the riverbank surrounded by tall balsams with pale mauve flowers which are visited by hundreds of bees. Impatiens feels drawn to the

flowers. Breathing deeply, he begins to relax for the first time in months. Not far away he sees Mimulus stepping out into the stream on some rocks, laughing and singing quietly to himself as he admires some beautiful yellow flowers hanging over the water. And Clematis too is nearby looking up into the trees and gazing with rapt attention at some small white blossoms shining like stars against the dark green of the leaves. As the others cross the bridge they stop to talk with Impatiens, Mimulus and Clematis and look at their flowers. How alike they are one to the other. Then they wander away each in his own direction, looking to see if they too have a special place in the garden. And, of course, each one looks for their flower and finds it growing happily in perfect circumstances.

Rock Rose and Gentian have a little further to walk because they have to climb to the downland, further away from the river. Wild Oat wanders everywhere, all through the garden and finds that his particular grass is growing on the side of every path. There are olive trees and vines, gorse bushes and oaks. Poor Heather has a long solitary walk to the top of the furthest hill but he does not mind at all. Water Violet finds a beautiful pool of still water, not far from a spring, which splashes cold and clear on to the rocks. There is a perfect place for everyone.

Later in the day they drift back in groups of two or three towards the bridge. Here they meet someone who appears to be the gardener. As they talk and ask questions he tells them many things about themselves and their individual plants. Cerato wants to know why his flowers are blue; Mimulus asks why his live so close to the water. Oak asks about roots, leaves and flowers and what they mean. Every part of the plant, the gardener tells them, has a significance and represents a quality of being. Where and how a plant grows describes aspects of these qualities. Just as Clematis and Impatiens behave differently as people, so their plants behave differently. However, some plants or trees have qualities in common, they have deep roots or hairy leaves or a particularly upright gesture and those characteristics are shared by both the person and the plant. Within the garden there are many different beings, each with an individuality or soul. It is the soul quality which informs the way the plant grows.

While they are talking, Wild Oat is looking around. Pointing to another part of the garden, beyond where the olive trees are growing, he asks, hesitantly, who might those others be? Where he is pointing the land is disturbed and in places the ground ploughed; there are fields and hedges and great boulders grouped together in the centre of one field. Many of the trees there are flowering, covered **in** blossoms, and they make a great show of strength and purpose. Those, says the gardener, are the people who have suffered in life, they are learning how to transform their experience. The group of friends look puzzled but want to go over and say hallo. When they get there they meet Aspen, Elm, Red Chestnut, Willow, Wild Rose and all the others: there were nineteen of them as well.

With so many people talking together it is natural that they begin to move into groups. Red Chestnut begins to tell them how worried he had been when Mimulus was perched on the stones in the middle of the river. Cherry Plum, imagining how frightened he would have been, begins taking deep breaths to calm himself down. Aspen stands beside them, his leaves a-tremble. Wild Oat, Scleranthus and Cerato are soon talking to Gentian and Gorse. They have all met before, of course, but now Hornbeam comes to join them. Heather, Impatiens and Water Violet form a little group on their own. As they talk and learn about their individual life stories, they realize that they can help each other, and work together to help everyone.

Just how this story will end is not clear, for it is still going on.

Appendix II

Twelve Ways of Being Unwell

in illness, each of the twelve types reacts in a different way:

Impatiens is quickly ill and quickly well again, impatient to be up and doing. There may be pain and tension but the character of the person is sure to be irritable. The child lies ill and Mum comes to offer sympathy and kindness. But nothing is right and nothing is accepted.

`Would you like some nice hot milk, darling?' `No! Just go

away and leave me alone.'

When the doctor comes they want an instant cure.

Clematis people like being ill: all that time with nothing to do but dream. They sleep easily and if awake will want television or novels to distract themselves. If they have a fever the hallucinations add interest to a dull day. The whole metabolism will slow as they drift away from the world.

Mimulus, being the remedy for fear, carries an anxiety that the problem is more serious. `I'm worried that I've got polyitis, it's what John's cousin had.'

`You'll be alright, don't worry,' says Dad, holding the child's limp hand.

Large round eyes look up in a silent appeal.

'The *Agrimony* patient though seriously ill makes light of the matter, talking to keep his visitors by the bedside. With the doctor he jokes about the problem.

`Have you heard the one about the man who thought he had a phantom limb? Well his wife...'. `Please hold still Mr Jones, I've got to a tricky stage and this might hurt a bit.'

Chicory people like to be ill; it gives them an opportunity to get things organized around them.

`You can read me another story now, Daddy, then Lucy can come up after tea and play a game and then Mummy . . .'.

`I'm sorry, but I've got to go. Oh come on, don't start crying again my darling.' *Vervains* know what is best for them and will not take advice, even from the doctor. `I know you don't think you are ill, but I would still recommend a few days in bed.'

`Don't be ridiculous I can't afford the time and besides I have my multi pack pills, here you should try some.'

Centaury, too, cannot be ill—who would wash and scrub and

tend to the others? If, finally they succumb, the illness is characterized by weakness and debility.

Cerato says: 'Am I ill, do you think? I am not sure. Somebody said yesterday that I looked awful but I haven't the spots that Mary had. Perhaps we should see what the other doctor says when he gets here.'

With *Scleranthus* the symptoms come and go, they move about, the temperature is up and down. In the morning they want to stay in bed, by eleven they are up and dressed, then turn around and they are back in bed again. They cannot make up their minds if they are ill.

Water Violet people are even more withdrawn than usual. They are knowledgeable and calm, speaking to the doctor as an equal. They do not like to be fussed over.

`just leave the tray on the chair, my dear, I will get it when I want it.'

Gentian gets depressed and, as Bach observed, is discouraged by any setback in recovery. Then they see the perverse fate that led to their illness. 'It's just my luck to get flu again this week when I was planning that trip.'

Rock Rose's behaviour is not so obvious. They are mute, remember. They run a high temperature and struggle to keep their hold on life. Those around soon share the apprehension.

Appendix III

Which Plants Come From Where?

P lants have been on the move since the beginning. They colonize an area when it is suitable, only to abandon it when circumstances change. While some plants extend territory through their roots, others employ a winged seed to assist dispersal; birds and animals can be pressed into service as carriers. Whether by accident or design, mankind has assisted in the dispersal of plants. Whatever the mechanism, it is clear that plants can be taken to the

four corners of the earth and, provided conditions are suitable, they thrive. *Impatiens glandulifera* is a clear case in point. It was imported from Kashmir by plant collectors and greedily consumed territory along the waterways once it had arrived in England.

The Roman armies took the Sweet Chestnut with them from the Mediterranean as they conquered north west Europe and brought vines to Britain (although they were not necessarily the first). Mimulus was introduced to the **UK** from the west coast of North America and as a reciprocal gesture, Scleranthus probably was taken to California—at the time of the gold rush in 1849, carried in animal feed. the English Elm was brought, not as seed but as sapling from France or Spain, to be used for hedging and as a landscape tree. Gorse was planted as cover for game birds. White Chestnut was introduced in the early seventeenth century from Macedonia. Star of Bethlehem may have been brought to England by the Crusaders. [See Maggie Campbell-Culver, *The Origin of Plants,* Headline, 2001]. Plants hunters like Earnest Wilson, 'Chinese Wilson' as he was called, made expeditions to send back specimens both for research and cultivation. Wilson was responsible for sending Cerato to the West.

All this points to the fact that plants do not know national boundaries. Even though certain geographical regions develop a unique flora, any plant may escape or be taken out from one region and introduced to another. Climate change alone forces the migration of plants: there are few species which could survive the cold in Britain during the last Ice Age, they had to travel south or perish. Equally, as the glaciers retreated, virgin soil was open for colonization by pioneers returning north. As with people, it is difficult to say who might be a true native. Consequently it is hard to see how Bach flower remedies can be claimed as English, rather than Irish, French or European—apart that is from the fact that Bach himself was English. Even Europe is too small a geographical enclosure if the origin of plants is properly considered.

MOLLY	Britian: Europe.
CRAB APPLE . .	Britian: Europe: Western Asia: Himalayas.
ELM	Britian, not native.
HORNBEAM. . .	Wales: Central and Southern England.
BEECH	Temperate Europe.
OAK	Britian. Europe: Asia.
WILLOW. . . .	Europe: Temperate Asia.
ASPEN	Britian: North Europe: Northern Asia.
PINE	Scotland: North & Central Europe: North Asia.
RED CHESTNUT.	North America.
WALNUT	Persia: Himalayas: Western Asia.
SWEET CHESTNUT.	Southern Europe: North Africa.
LARCH	Central Europe.
IMPATIENS . . .	Himalayas.
CERATO	Thibet.
CHERRY PLUM. .	Caucasus.
MIMULUS. . . .	North America.
WHITE CHESTNUT.	Caucasus: Balkans: North India.

Dr Bach recognized all this, we may be sure. He typed a list of eighteen of the remedy plants and trees, indicating the region from whence they came. In *The Twelve Healers 6' Other Remedies* he noted that: All the remedies can be found growing naturally in the British Isles except Vine, Olive, Cerato, although some are true natives of other countries along middle and southern Europe to northern India and Tibet'. More significant than geography is the identification of the correct species—that is why Bach always provided the Latin name—for it is the plant which is important, not

the country in which it grows.

It follows from this that anyone may make a Bach remedy, wherever they live, provided that the true species has been identified. There may be constraints upon the quality of the mother tincture, but territory is not one of them. How foolish, then, to suggest that Bach remedies can only be made at one location in England. Certainly neither Weeks, nor Bach before her, suggested that a location in the Thames Valley was in any way preferable to one in any other county or country. In the very first *Bach Remedy News Letter,* March 195o, Nora reported that a list of the plant names had been sent to Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, so that Latin names might be verified. *Centaurium erythaea,* for instance, had been changed to *C. umbellatum, Impatiens roylei* to *I. Glandulifera,* Crab Apple was *Malus pumilia,* rather than *Pyrus malus.* Then came the note that 'friends in Australia' had found Centaury growing profusely in fields near Sydney. 'We should be interested to know which of the remedy plants grow wild in Africa, New Zealand, Switzerland, America'. *[Newsletter,* No. 1, March 195o, page 2]. In this first newsletter, as in every succeeding one, she provided full details of how to find and identify one of the Bach remedy flowers, so that people might prepare their own essences.

By *Newsletter* No. 3, in September 195o, Nora Weeks was already dealing with one of the most controversial questions concerning Bach remedies. Was it really true that anybody could make them? Surely only essences made by Dr Bach have a true potency. Or perhaps, only essences made by trained helpers at *Mount Vernon* could really be effective. Nora's reply?

Although it is a privilege to have stocks from Dr Bach 's own preparations, any made by yourselves will be found to be just as potent. Many people have already made Tinctures both by the sun method and by the boiling method, and the medicines prepared from them have brought the same excellent results.

Purists might argue that the best remedy should be made where the plant originated. After all, Bach made Olive and Vine in the Mediterranean. But then we would have to journey to China to prepare Cerato—an interesting prospect—as Wilson listed the Min

river valley as the only place where he found it.

There is evidence that plants adapt and take a different form when growing in different localities. This is true of Agrimony, depending upon whether it is found in moist clay or dry chalk-downland. And it may well be that adaptation of form, brought on by differing environmental influences, leads to both species variation and the development of a new species. The *Ray Society* published monographs which noted the variation in species such as Campion *(Silene)* and Knapweed *(Centaurea).* Variant forms of Red Chestnut *(Aesculus carnea)* have already been noted. The tendency of *Mimulus guttatus* to hybridize with *M. luteus* has been used to advantage by nurserymen for many years. Mention should be made of Luther Burbank (1849-1926) who did pioneering work in California adapting plant forms so that he even grew a spineless cactus.

Nature is constantly in experiment—that was Darwin's thesis—and the 'sport' which throws up an unusual pattern may become the species of tomorrow. When making flower essences it is important to be aware of this potential for variation and instability. These in turn are influenced by the provenance of an individual plant and its location.

Appendix IV

Homoeopathy, Dilutions and a Numbers Game

When Dr Bach discovered his new remedies he made them available through the leading homoeopathic pharmacies in London: Keane & Ashwell, Epps and Nelsons. Just as he had developed the Bach nosodes and made them available to a wider public, so too his flower remedies. He had not thought of patenting a new medicine but made his discoveries immediately and widely known to those who might make use of them: doctors. The chemists (he listed them in *The Twelve Healers)* had 'very kindly undertaken the distribution of these remedies at a moderate price'. In 1936, a single remedy cost 8d, postage zd. By today's prices, with postage at 27p, the single remedy would cost £1.08. A full set of twelve remedies were to cost five shillings: moderate indeed.

By working through the homoeopathic pharmacies, Bach employed the best means available—there were no health food stores in 193o. Homoeopathic remedies represented the only alternative to conventional medicine. But just because he availed himself of this service we should not be drawn to the conclusion that the Bach flower remedies were homeopathic medicines, either then or subsequently. This was a convenience, no more. In his writings Bach made it clear that the flower remedies were not homoeopathic. At first, the Bach Centre supported this view. In the *Bach Remedy News Letter* (September 1951), Frances Wheeler wrote 'these remedies are not homoeopathic, nor are they prepared by homoeopathic methods'. Even after the death of Nora Weeks there was an announcement, in June 1978, when John Ramsell wrote:

... we sometimes label our packages 'Homoeopathic Tinctures. This reference must not be taken literally... . The homeopathic methods of succession and tituration do not apply. This means there can be no such determined levels of potency as 6x, 12X, or Sox etc., in relation to the Bach Remedies.

We can agree on that. But if Bach remedies are not homoeopathic why label them as such?

The deceit of calling them homoeopathic remedies was confirmed in 198o when an announcement was placed in the American Homoeopathic Journal which effectively gave homoeopathic status to Bach remedies in the USA. Significantly, Richard Katz and Patricia Kaminski of the North American Flower Essence Society resisted this move. In a monograph entitled *Flower Essences & Homeopathy,* 1983, they conducted a forensic analysis of the issues. They concluded that homoeopathy and flower essence therapy were related but essentially different.

The very earliest labels carried simply the name of the remedy: Star of Bethlehem, Rock Water, without any indication of potency. An advertisement, dated June 1933, in *Heal Thyself* (the magazine produced by J. Ellis Barker, which had previously used the title *The Homeopathic World),* offered *The Twelve Bach Remedies* in 'disc' form. Presumably this was some kind of pill. The advertisement was placed by Nelson's Pharmacy of 73, Duke Street, London. The

remedies were offered for sale at twelve shillings, post extra, more than double the price Bach had announced.

It is unclear just when the Bach Centre began bottling and selling direct to the public. While the newsletter offered various books for sale it never directly promoted the remedies, preferring to encourage people to prepare their own. But at a certain point John Ainsworth, the Chief Pharmacist at Nelsons, advised Nora Weeks that Bach remedies would be better protected if the authorities regarded them as homoeopathic. To provide a notional homoeopathic dilution the labels then indicated: 'active ingredients: 1-24o per cent of an aqueous infusion of the flowers of . . .'. In March 1963 the *Bach Remedy News Letter* carried a short piece on labelling. Here Nora Weeks wrote 'we have decided to conform to these [pharmaceutical] regulations and state on the stock bottle labels the quantities and percentages of the flowers contained in them'.* The quantity 1:24o per cent is meaningless, however. It is possible to have I: 24o; one percent is possible (i.e. moo), but not 1:24o per cent. It was a pseudo-homoeopathic dilution, apparently, designed to represent the quantity of the original flowers present in the bottle. In the sun method this quantity would have been zero, in every case. In the boiling method a dry ash test could have established a figure but it would have had no real meaning since the Bach remedies were and are based upon a quality and not a quantity. The label of Rock Water, incidentally, read 'active ingredients: 1-240 per cent of solarized Aqua Petra'.

In Weeks and Bullen's *Bach Flower Remedies Illustration &*

Preparation (1964), we can read that the actual dilution used at this time was two drops of mother tincture in one ounce of brandy (3o ml). The exact levels of dilution had varied. In 1933 Bach had recommended that one drop of mother tincture potentized eight ounces of water (25o ml), 'from which doses may be taken by the teaspoonful as required' *(Collected Writings,* p. 81). Later in the same year he called mother tincture 'stock' *(Collected Writings,* p. 67), and under 'method of dosage' he spoke of four drops added to a four ounce bottle (125 ml). He said 'bottles of the remedy supplied by the chemist are stock and are to be used for medicating four-ounce bottles as described here'. The same formula was repeated in 1934 *(Collected Writings,* p. 57). Does this mean that Keane & Ashwell, Nelsons and Epps were all handing over mother tincture to customers?

By 1936 Bach wrote in *The Twelve Healers & Other Remedies* that two drops should be taken from stock bottles and added to a 'small bottle nearly filled with water; if this is required to keep for some time a little brandy may be added as a preservative' *(Collected Writings,* p. 46). So he is now down to two drops in a small bottle. This might be taken directly by mouth or diluted again 'in a little water, milk or any way convenient'.

In the *Bach Remedy News Letter* of June 195o Weeks gave a clear account of how the remedies were prepared. This was repeated in *Bach Flower Remedies Illustration* 6. *Preparation.* Here at least there was no confusion. There are three stages:

I. The preparation of the mother essence

II. The making of the stock bottle (two drops in 3o ml)
III. The medicine bottle for dosage.

It seems unlikely that Nora was acting contrary to Bach's instructions. The earlier contradictions have the appearance of being experimental. The labelling and declared 'potency' is another matter.

Two drops of mother tincture in 3o ml of brandy, for preparing stock, sounds easy. But as soon as the production volumes begin to rise it must have been necessary to make up larger quantities of

stock before pouring into the small bottles. (In 1981 the Bach Centre offered stock bottles for sale in the following sizes: 5 ml, 8 ml, 10 ml, 30 ml, 35 ml.) If two drops in 30 ml is correct it follows that sixty-six drops are required for one litre. But what actual dilution is that? Drops and millilitres are not equivalent measures. A drop is a variable quantity depending upon the size of the dropper (or lip) and the specific gravity of the liquid. This point was noted by Hahnemann who conducted experiments to establish that 100 drops of alcohol (52.6 per cent) = 2.7 ml, wo drops of water = 6.28 ml (P. Bartel, *Hahnemann's Legacy).* Similar experiments have established that 100 drops of brandy at 4o per cent alcohol = 2.91 ml. A 3o ml bottle of brandy, therefore, contains some 1,000 drops. This gives a dilution of two drops per I,000 or 1:500. Mother essence is brandy and water (20 per cent alcohol) and 100 drops=3.80 ml, giving a dilution of 1:395. It must be stated that this is calculated on the basis of the pipette which gives the largest drop; dilutions as low as 1:800 would be produced by smaller drops, from different pipettes.

These figures bear no relation to the 1:24o per cent discussed above. John Ainsworth left no explanation and it is doubtful whether Nora Weeks understood the calculation. It was probably based upon the old measures of a drachm, a drop and a minim. Because the volume of drops varied, pharmacists had long ago adopted a standard measure:

60 drops or minims = 1 drachm = 1/8 fluid ounce.

A fluid ounce contained 48o such 'standard' drops. A notional dilution of 1:24o for Bach remedies follows. But this is not 1:24o per cent.

When Nelsons Pharmacy was sold, John Ainsworth set up Ainsworth Pharmacy, at the premises of Keane & Ashwell in New Cavendish Street. Some years later Nelsons bought the business of Bach Flower Remedies Ltd. In their attempt to register Bach remedies as homoeopathic they revived the old 1:24o per cent dilution, explaining it like this:

1:240 per cent is an outdated scale of measurement. Bach

Flower Remedies are akin to homeopathic remedies, therefore the same labelling conventions are used and the dilution is expressed using the decimal or x scale. The 5x dilution is calculated as follows:

Step One — the basic mother tincture produces a dry residue of 1 % i.e. 1 in 100.

Step Two — This is mixed with an equal quantity of brandy, 1 in 2.

Step Three— There are 1,000 drops of grape alcohol (brandy) 27% in 3o ml. Two drops of Mother Tincture are added to this 2 in 1,000 or 1 in 500.

5x is calculated as follows:

1/100 x1/2 x 1/500 = 1/1000,000 or 10 = 5X

This is ingenious but it has little bearing on the truth. There is no dry residue of 1%; 27% grape alcohol cannot be called brandy.

The same booklet went on to claim that Bach remedies function homoeopathically because:

1. They are potentized.

2. The stock is diluted, without a traceable active ingredient.

3. They do not contain the physical plant but the pattern of energy.

4. The sun and boiling methods are recognized by the British Homoeopathic Pharmacopoeia. To reply to the points in order:

1. There is no serial dilution, succession or other homoeopathic process involved in preparing Bach remedies.

2. No traceable active ingredient is found in the mother tincture before dilution—not so in homoeopathy where the mother tincture is prepared from the physical material.

3. See 2; there is no change in polarity (page 57) as in classical homoeopathy.

4. The British Homoeopathic Pharmacopoeia included Bach remedies only at the insistence of Nelsons, who employed two of the five members of the Scientific Committee (1993).

In July 2000 Nelsons abandoned their attempt to register Bach remedies as homoeopathic in the UK. In other countries they continue to promote them as homoeopathic medicines.

This whole subject of dilution can be understood easily once it is accepted that Bach remedies are qualitative and not quantitative. Again this is a clear contrast with homoeopathy which employs multiple high potencies to different effects. The surprise in homoeopathy comes when we realize that the serial dilution leaves no measurable quantity of the original material in the remedy. With Bach's flower essences there never was a measurable quantity. From the beginning the mother tincture and the remedy were only qualities: a pattern which cannot be measured, at least not by physical means. This quality is a means of recognition, the character which makes the remedy what it is. A quality is recognized as a signature or gesture: like a phrase of music, it is not made more by virtue of volume. The signature written into the spring water of a mother essence is like a signature which proves identity, it is not clearer for being written larger.

Dilution therefore is managed not by quantity but quality. When Bach was experimenting in the 1930s he varied the measures. By the time he died he had settled on a formula which worked. There is no need to imagine that the remedy has greater strength at stock or even mother tincture level, provided the pattern is properly there and its integrity has been maintained. In the same way there is no need to increase the dose in order to gain greater benefit. It is repetition of the pattern which determines dosage, not the size of the physical body or the intensity of the difficulty.

- Appendix V
- *Chronology from 1886 to 2002*
- 188624 September, Edward Bach born, Moseley, near

Birmingham.

- 1903-6 Worked at his father's brass foundry.
- 1906-12 Medical School, Birmingham and London. 1912 Graduated MRCS, LRCP; postgraduate training.
- 1913 14 January, married Gwendoline Caiger.

University College Hospital, London.

- 1915-19 Bacteriological research.
- 1916 Daughter born to Edward Bach and Kitty Light.
- 1917 5 April, Gwendoline Bach died of diphtheria at Golders Green,
- London.
- 2 May, Edward Bach marries Kitty Light of Islington, London. July, Bach collapsed at work, received surgery for cancer.
- 1918 Influenza epidemic.
- 1919 March, appointed to London Homoeopathic Hospital; research at
- Nottingham Place laboratories, London WI.
- 1920 April, read paper *Vaccine Therapy . . .* to London Homoeopathic
- Society.
- Research with F. H. Teale.
- 1922 Began Harley Street practice, London and moved to laboratories
- at Park Crescent.
- Development of the seven Bach nosodes. Separated from Kitty.
- 1924 Read paper *Intestinal Toxaemia . . .* at British Homoeopathic
- Congress, London.
- 1925 Wrote *Chronic Disease a Working Hypothesis* with Dr Charles E.
- Wheeler.
- 1927 Read paper *Chronic Disease...* at International Homoeopathic
- Congress, London.
- 1928 September, discovered *Impatiens, Mimulus and*

Clematis at

- Crickhowell.
- November, read paper *Rediscovery of Psora* at British Homoeopathic Society.
- 1929 Gave up nosode therapy.
- 193o January, published *Preparing Vaccines ...*
- February, published Some New remedies & New Uses.
- May, closed medical practice and left London.
- Bettws-y-Coed, Wales, developed type theory.
- Abersoch, Wales, developed sun method; wrote Heal Thyself.
- July, Pwllheli, Wales.
- August/September, Cromer, Norfolk, found Agrimony, Chicory, Vervain Centaury, Cerato, Scleranthus.
- Some Fundamental Considerations . . . listed eleven new remedies, including Cotyledon and Arvensis.
- 1931 February, Heal Thyselfpublished,
- Ye Suffer From Yourselves, talk at Southport, Cheshire.
- March, left for Wales.
- May, staying near Abergavenny.
- June, at Lewes in Sussex, *Water Violet.* July, in Thames Valley, found *Gentian.* September, Westerham in Kent, made *Gentian.*
- Winter in Cromer.
- 1932. Spring, in London, consulting rooms in Wimpole Street.

Wrote *Free Thyself* in Regents Park, published privately it listed twelve remedies, including *Rock Rose,* made at Westerham in June.

Autumn, returned to Cromer, *The Twelve Healers.*

November/December, advertised remedies, correspondence with General Medical Council. 1933 April, Marlow, Buckinghamshire, *Gor*

May, Cromer, *Oak.*

- August, Abergavenny, Wales, Rock Water, Heather.

- Autumn, Cromer, The Twelve Healers 6- Four Helpers.
- 1934 March, left Cromer.
- 1934 April, Sotwell, Oxfordshire, at Wellsprings and Mount Vernon.
- (cont.) June, Olive, Vine, Wild Oat, The Twelve Healers & Seven Helpers.
- 1935 Discovery of Second Nineteen, and the boiling method.
- 1936 September, The Twelve Healers 6- Other Remedie published.
- 24 September, Healing by Herbs... a lecture at Wallingford. October, Masonic Lecture.
- 27 November, Bach died at Ladygrove Nursing Home, Didcot. Causes of death listed as cardiac failure and sarcoma. Nora Weeks was sole beneficiary under his will. Death certificate for E. Bach, medical practitioner of Wellsprings, Sotwell,
- 1937 New edition of The Twelve Healers & Other Remedies.
- 1938 To Thine Own Self Be True, by Mary Tabor.
- 1940 Medical Discoveries ... Nora Weeks' biography of Bach.
- 1950 March, The Bach Remedy News Letter, first issue. June newsletter described in detail the 'sun method of potentizing'.
- December newsletter described how to prepare Rescue Remedy putting two drops of each the five remedies into a dosage bottle.
- 1951 September newsletter stated categorically that the remedies are not
- homoeopathic.
- 1955 A fund created to purchase Mount Vernon.
- [1]958 Formation of The Dr Bach Healing Trust. It had three objectives: to
- purchase property (Mt Vernon) for the work of flower healing', to pay for its maintenance, and to 'promote and expand the work' as the Trustees think fit. The first trustees were Nora Weeks, Victor Bullen and Frances 'Thomas.
- 1964 Bach Flower Remedies Illustration & Preparation, Nora Weeks and

- Victor Bullen.
- 1971 Chancellor's Handbook published.
- Nickie Murray and John Ramsell joined the Bach Centre.
- 1973 Ramsell and Murray became trustees of The Dr Bach Healing Trust.
- 1974 Weeks and Bullen began trading as Dr Edward Bach's Team.
- 1975 May, Victor Bullen died, leaving everything to Nora Weeks.
- 1976 April, Weeks, Murray and Ramsell trade as Dr Edward Bach's
- Centre.
- 1978 January, Nora Weeks died, leaving her residual estate to the
- trustees of The Dr Edward Bach Trust 'to be used in their absolute discretion in the furtherance of their work . . . the receipt of the Treasurer or other proper officer of the Trust shall be a good and sufficient discharge . . .
- 1979 February, Ramsell registered trademark 'Bach Flower Remedies',
- UK.
- Bach's description of 'methods of preparation' removed from The Twelve Healers (3- Other Remedies. September newsletter announced that the Weeks & Bullen book Bach Flower Remedies Illustration
- & Preparation will not be reprinted.
- 1983 Ramsell and Murray formed company Bach Flower Remedies Ltd,
- transferring all assets of Dr Edward Bach Centre to the company.
- 1984 28 February, further registration of 'Bach Flower Remedies' as
- trademark in UK by Bach Flower Remedies Ltd.
- 1985 Ramsell's daughter, Judy Howard joined the Bach Centre.
- 1986 Bach's writings out of copyright. Publication of Collected Writings
- *of Edward Bach.*

- Murray left Bach Centre, retiring to Crete and then California.
- 1987 Murray sold shares in Bach Flower Remedies Ltd to **BFR** (Mount
- Vernon) Ltd, owned by Ramsell.
- Bach Flower Remedies Ltd dissolved.
- 1988 Publication of *Healing Herbs of Edward Bach—a practical guide to*
- *making the remedies.*
- 1989 Four further trademarks using the name 'Bach' registered in UK by
- **BFR** (Mount Vernon) Ltd.
- Healing Herbs began production of Bach flower remedies.
- 1991 January, **BFR** (Mount Vernon) Ltd made exclusive agreement with
- A. Nelson Ltd for packaging and marketing of remedies.
- Two further trademarks using the name 'Bach' registered in **UK** by **BFR** (Mount Vernon) Ltd.
- 1993 Nelsons buy BFR (Mount Vernon) Ltd for 4.3 million pounds,
- reforming the company as Bach Flower Remedies Ltd (No a).
- British Homoeopathic Pharmacopoeia carried monographs on Bach flower remedies, listing dilutions as 5x, using ethanol 22%.
- 1997 2.6 February, Healing Herbs applied to High Court for revocation
- of trademarks containing the word 'Bach'.

1998 April, High Court, London (Mr Justice Neuberger) decided that

`Bach' is generic and cannot be used as a registered trademark.

1999 October, Court of Appeal, London, upheld High Court decision.

2000 House of Lords rejected further appeal on trademark

decision.

Appendix VI

Building a Repertory of Plant Gestures

ROOTS are the means by which plants are anchored in the earth, absorbing the water and nutrients used in metabolism. While the sun's energy is converted through photosynthesis by the leaves, the earth's mineral substance is absorbed and converted by the root. A plant's physical body is built by the combination of the two—the combination of physical form (earth and water) and consciousness (light and air).

Roots tell of physical connections, family relationships and the past. We have our roots in the past and draw the physical form of our body through the genetic link to our parents. The degree of attachment we have to the physical world can be measured by the depth of these roots. At one extreme there is the firm anchor to the past and family of Vervain and Chicory, at the other the tenuous finger-touch of Water Violet, showing a withdrawal from the world. Of the trees Olive probably has the most extensive root structure although, extraordinarily, it can be transplanted. Oak is deeply involved in life and consequently deeply rooted, while Crab Apple and Beech have shallow roots and are more superficial. Clematis has a hidden root, its link to both the physical and the past unseen.

Impatiens, like Mimulus, has no strong hold upon the earth and must have the constant sustenance of water—the will to stay in life is easily broken. Rock Rose and Scleranthus, better able to survive dry conditions, have deeper roots forming a network of fine threads drawing every drop of moisture from the soil; the life-root is fragile but draws maximum advantage from what is available. Wild Oat is rooted well enough but the connection to the root is easily broken and pulled away. If the root connection is so readily severed there is not a strong link to the past. The root represents continuity of purpose in life: adventitious roots indicate determination and renewal of purpose (as with Mimulus and Willow).

The root can also serve as store for the future: the place where sugars produced by photosynthesis are turned to starch. This is in

the taproot of Chicory, or the swollen roots of Vervain and Agrimony, three perennials which use this store of energy to overwinter. Starch is the product of metabolism and so the accrued material of the life process; in a word, experience. From the taproot comes the budding point for the next year's growth. The root then illustrates the past, present and future. The accumulated experience of one cycle of growth influences the next. In terms of the human soul condition this indicates the degree of attachment to the physical world and the prospect for the life—weak in the case of Water Violet, strong with Chicory. Dutch Elm disease travels through the root; Aspen and Cherry Plum propagate through suckering.

Soil type also correlates with the remedy state. White alkaline soils are preferred by plants with a weak response to life: Clematis, Rock Rose, Gentian. Acid soils are preferred by the stronger remedy plants such as Holly, Vine, Impatiens. This is a general preference, not a rule—it is curious to see that Chicory, with a strong root attachment, also prefers alkaline soils. Many factors are at work. Light, sandy soils are preferred by Scleranthus, Sweet Chestnut and Star of Bethlehem; they experience an excess of the earth element.

THE STEM SYSTEM shows the structure of theplant and the structure of the life: how the individual manifests in the world. At simplest there are three plant structures: upright, recumbent and diffused. The upright plant shows the strong expression of a confident self, as seen in Impatiens and Vervain. The recumbent, falling back upon the earth, lacks a clear self-identity, as with Clematis and Rock Rose. The diffused plant structure is vacillating, changeable, adaptable: half-way between the other two, as with Scleranthus, Cerato or Heather. It is possible to see a varying combination of these three forms. Wild Oat, for instance, is thin and upright but bending over at the top: it loses direction. Chicory is upright yet diffused in structure: it is strong-willed but fussy and changeable. Water Violet leaves form a geometrical matrix in water but with an upright stem it enters the air with a clear confidence: the emotions are restrained but expressed through a clear and singular mentality.

The stem represents the ego state of the individual: the sense of self. Thus the ego of Water Violet is not apparent, except at flowering. This appearance of the self in the world is also shown in the speed and direction of the plant's growth. It is a picture of how much space that individual lays claim to: Centaury is modest, so too Scleranthus. The more upright the plant or tree the clearer the statement: 'here I stand, straight and tall . . Cerato has little sense of stature and so a small sense of self. The mighty gesture of the Oak stands in contrast. Curiously, this makes a point about Vine—for all the bluster and bullying the sense of self is weak. But that is the cause of the chronic life problem.

The stem represents the water element. It is the means by which the fluids of the plant are carried and distributed from the earth to the air. This occurs by transpiration through the leaves. The stem also carries the sugars formed in the leaves throughout the plant structure. It is the organ of circulation, the vascular system, carrying sap throughout the plant like blood. The amount of water in the stem indicates the emotional or feeling nature of the plant or the person. Impatiens, Mimulus and Water Violet are strongly emotional; Clematis, Cerato and Vervain are drier. In Clematis the stems carry more air than water: the feeling nature is displaced by the mentality. This dryness, combined with the recumbent posture, shows a lack of involvement in life.

The surface of the stems shows the energy that is circulating within the system. A smooth surface indicates a clear, directed energy commanded by the inner intent, as with Impatiens, a kind of self-preoccupation. Hairs on the stem show an outward sensing and responsiveness, sensitivity to the world around, as with Agrimony, Chicory and Wild Oat. When the surface bark is marked and furrowed we see a picture of the etheric or energetic system, showing strength (Oak) or weakness (Clematis or Gorse).

Mimulus

Mimulus is a smooth-stemmed plant that grows by water with a posture that is both upright and recumbent. It cannot sustain a strong sense of self. It is a strong emotional state but not sensing

the emotional state of others. Mimulus people are inward looking. The perennial root sustains the plant through the winter so that the fear (of physical things) is inherited; maybe it comes through from another life. The fact that the stems grow adventitious roots, allowing new plants to develop, suggests a potential for new beginnings in the life.

THE LEAF of the plant may be simple or complex, large or small, smooth or hairy, rounded, pointed, symmetrical, unbalanced, light or dark in colour. The form interprets the general meaning the leaf has as an organ of respiration—leaves are the lungs of the plant (lungs which exchange oxygen and carbon dioxide). How we breathe tells about the exchange we have with life: shallow breath small exchange, big breath big exchange. The leaf form generally reinforces the statement made by the structure of the stems.

The large, pointed, lanceolate leaves of Impatiens show a defined life objective, a mentality aware of intention and achievement. The serrated edge indicates a kind of irritant antagonism (as with Wild Rose and Sweet Chestnut). A smooth leaf shows a lack of curiosity about others, a mental outlook defined by itself (Clematis, Vine, Mimulus). In a similar way, the simpler the form of the leaf the simpler the thought for that life or circumstance. Scleranthus and Wild Oat show a less complex mentality than Water Violet or Agrimony.

The weaker the symmetry about the axis of the midrib, the less the structure of the stem shows through in the leaf and so the weaker the sense of self and life purpose, (Scleranthus, Wild Oat). Where the indication of the stem and leaf are contradictory, as in Wild Oat, then we can detect a contradiction between the emotional and mental outlook. Wild Oat has the upright structure of self-confidence, but with a dry stem it is not reinforced by the emotional life. The problem is then compounded by the narrow, directionless mentality of the linear, ribbon leaf. The hairy stem and leaf only make the Wild Oat more aware of others and the situation in which they languish.

THE FLOWER contains within itself the other threeparts of the plant: it is an adapted leaf, grows out of the stem and through

the seed it connects to the root. However, it carries the predominant consciousness of the spirit within the plant. Furthest from the root (earth) it is at the apogee of the cycle of development (earth, water, air and fire). The flower looks to the future, it carries the organs of reproduction and transformation. All the changes in plant form come about through sexual reproduction and the characteristics which pass down to the new generation through the seed. The flower is the most unstable part of the plant, therefore vulnerable and susceptible to change.

The process of pollination, like the form of the flower, tells us about the complexity of the life. Wind pollination uses more effort to achieve less effect (Oak) than the specialized procedures of cross-pollination (Water Violet). The simple, open, five-petalled form of Cerato or Wild Rose does not carry the hidden secrets of Gentian or Mimulus with their enclosing corolla. The colour of the flower speaks of the vibratory quality, although colour is the most easily changed characteristic of many species and so not the most reliable guide to meanings. That said, the colour of the flower is the most striking quality to most observers: it is the wonder ful blue of Chicory which we love, the golden yellow of Gorse we find uplifting.

The yellow of Gorse stimulates renewal and clear mental energy (the sun)—the same is found in Agrimony, Mimulus, Mustard and Rock Rose, even in the golden, winter twigs of Willow and the yellow centre of Water Violet or Wild Rose. Yet the expression of that energy is mediated by the patterning within the whole plant, not just the flower. In the same way there are common themes expressed by all the white flowers—Cherry Plum, Clematis, Crab Apple, Holly, Olive, Star of Bethlehem, Sweet Chestnut—which draw down light to heal, cleanse, repair, energize and elevate consciousness. White flowers are different to the 'green' remedies (Hornbeam, Scleranthus, Wild Oat and perhaps Chestnut Bud) which act at the mid-point between thought and deed. The blue flowers, Chicory and Cerato, bring down to earth the celestial energy of the blue sky. Where yellow stimulates response, blue receives meaning and purpose. Yellow and blue combine as green—midway between action and reflection. Many of the remedies are made with green leaves and stems and these also colour the

essence. A few of Bach's flowers are at the red end of the spectrum: Heather, Honeysuckle, Larch and Red Chestnut. Here the colour signifies over-involvement in the outer world.

While roots, stems and leaves last throughout the year (and often for many years) the flowers are ephemeral, rarely lasting longer than a week or so and sometimes only a few hours. The longer the flower lasts the less reactive and responsive the emotional state: Chicory, Rock Rose and Cerato quickly collapse, Gentian and Centaury last for a week or more. Scleranthus and Clematis, lacking petals, stay open, attached to the stem while the seeds develop. They pay less attention to the world around them.

The flowering of a plant is the point towards which all its life leads. Agrimony and Vervain flower progressively along the stem, growing ever higher; Chicory flowers at all levels within the plant, the flowers are more random and the soul type less directed to achieve the soul aim. Aspen flowers progressively downwards, seeking the earth. The flower often points in the direction of the needed change for the remedy state as in Vervain or Oak where the small flowers point a contrast to the powerful stems. The relative proportion of the flowers to the rest of the plant or tree structure also illustrates the relative proportion of the different elements within the life structure. The Oak people (mighty structure but small flowers) are concerned by the material world and how to work within it; they are not activated primarily by the spirit. Scleranthus flowers at every turn, the whole plant structure turned to flower; it must resolve the life purpose or die. That is the action of the spirit within the material world. The flower therefore illustrates the proportion of spirit living within the entire life structure. Where does this leave Chestnut Bud and Rock Water? Chestnut Bud acts more within the ambit of material, worldly experience rather than spirit. And Rock Water, for all its aspiration, is about the outward form of things rather than the inner development of soul potentials. Rock Water has its face turned to the world rather than to heaven. In contrast, the Olive tree is covered with flowers—the renewal of energy coming not from the material world but through light and the spirit. Similarly with Sweet Chestnut and Cherry Plum: all three trees have a covering of white flowers. It is the same with Gorse

when the golden fire of renewal enters the earth in our northern spring.

SEED: the formation of the seed, its dispersal, dormancy and germination tell a story: how the

plant moves into the change of a new life. The potentials for self-fertilization are limited and so are

thesoul potentials of those plants that are not dedicated to cross-pollination. The potentials for Wild Oat (self-pollinating) are fewer than those for Water Violet (with self-incompatibility). Wild Oat, however, sets more seed and has a high rate of germination. The quantity of seed and what proportion will germinate and grow to maturity show the tenacity to life and the future. Impatiens is a successful species in this respect, so too is Vervain if conditions are right; Clematis (although it has plenty of viable seed) is less so; Mimulus can fail almost entirely. There is a curious situation with Cerato which will occasionally set seed but germination, in the open, cannot be predicted.

How the seeds are dispersed also informs the pattern of the life. Clematis seeds float in the wind, which we might expect for this air-centred remedy state; so too do Hornbeam's. Oak's acorns fall straight to the earth and are distributed by animals and birds; here the element of earth preponderates. The Gorse seed-pods explode in hot, dry conditions of summer—the element of fire at work. Mimulus seeds fall into the river to be swept away by the water. Each process tells us something of the remedy state and the consciousness which lies within the plant.

Impatiens and Gorse both have exploding pods; both have bullet-like seeds. In remedial terms, there is the contrasting need for relaxation (to stop the explosion) and for more tension in order to build up to a last effort. Mimulus, Centaury, Gentian and Rock Rose all have small, light seeds which are easily washed into the earth—they share the character of nervous apprehension and uncertainty about their life. Clematis, Hornbeam, Pine, Larch and Wild Oat each have a wind-blown seed which can be carried in the

air by a kind of bract: they share a lack of practical involvement at the physical level. This in contrast to Agrimony and Vervain which have hooks or hairs which attach to animals, carrying them out into the world, just as acorns are distributed by birds and squirrels.

Seed germination illustrates the way the soul manifests in the world—the rooting down into physical reality. Impatiens seeds are almost one hundred percent viable and all germinate together

to form a blanket of young plants, shutting out others. Chicory seeds germinate next to the parent plant. Wild Oat and Clematis are slow and their presence is often hidden for the first year. Hornbeam and Wild Rose germinate in year two—slow to take up life opportunity. Mustard will only germinate when brought to the surface at the correct depth when the ground is disturbed: an opportunist.

Large seeds (nuts) indicate a robust approach to life—Oak, the Chestnuts, Walnut and Olive. The smaller the seeds the less sure the approach to the future—Centaury, Gentian, Mimulus and Rock Rose. The infertile seed of Elm indicates a future which is in doubt, compromised. Sometimes, survival is only possible through a strong root in the physical world and the past.

This appendix does not attempt to create a definitive list of the plant gestures noted in the main text of the book. It serves to point to a way in which the reader may choose to continue research, building a library of observations on plants. This allows personal inspiration to combine with objective analysis of form and function. This is not, after all, a mechanical system where all smooth-leaved plants should be viewed as self-centred or all water plants as superior! Plant gesture is more art than science in that sense. And yet there is the healthy prospect of being scientific in the process of observation. Through observation we can come to understand how plants express the living forces of nature.*