

Loyal to the Ancestral Line: Hahnemann's Nephew, Dr C B Trinius

by Myra Nissen, RSHom (NA), CCH

Late last year, I had the honor of meeting Gilbert von Studnitz, a direct descendant, four times removed, of Charlotte Hahnemann, Samuel Hahnemann's eldest sister.

Gilbert was born in Germany and lived there until he was four years old, when he settled in Los Angeles with his mother. He became interested in his family's history when he was eighteen and staying with his grandmother in Düsseldorf. While searching in the attic he found a suitcase that had belonged to his great-grandparents and which contained old-fashioned portraits, photos and treasures from his family's past.

Several of the portraits were of Charlotte Hahnemann and her son, Carl Bernhard Trinius. By looking through family papers, talking to relatives and doing some research online, Gilbert learned that his great, great, great, great, grandmother was Charlotte Hahnemann, sister and favorite sibling of Samuel Hahnemann.¹ Their parents were Christian Gottfried Hahnemann, a painter and decorator at the Saxon porcelain factory at Meissen, and Johanna Christiana Speiss. After this discovery, Gilbert became an avid genealogist and began to research deeper into his past. Gilbert concludes, "There is one thing about genealogy: you will never get to the end of it. It is all about luck and constant research."

Gilbert's story sparked my interest in his great, great, great grandfather, Carl Bernard Trinius, a German homeopathic physician who was said to have been Samuel Hahnemann's favorite nephew.²

Charlotte Hahnemann's first husband, Johann Anton Trinius, was a Lutheran Pastor and author. Their son, Carl Bernhard Trinius, was born on March 7, 1778 in Eisleben, Germany. He



Dr. Carl Bernard Trinius (1778 - 1843), nephew of Samuel Hahnemann. Courtesy of Gilbert von Studnitz

began to study medicine in 1792, first in Jena and then in Halle where his interest turned to botany. Trinius graduated as a Doctor of Medicine in Göttingen in 1802 and as his career developed he became a distinguished physician, homeopath, botanist and poet.

After graduation, Trinius moved first to the German-Russian Baltic provinces and then to Russia. Later, he moved to Hasenpoth, a city in Latvia, where he met poet Ulrich von Schlippenbach. Trinius married Josepha Boriskovski in 1804, with whom he had two daughters.

Trinius became the personal physician to Duchess Antoinette of Württemberg in 1808. His travels with her through Germany and Russia are documented in a letter his mother wrote to Hahnemann on October 17, 1811: "I saw my youngest son in the cortège of the Duchess of Württemberg, on its way from the sea baths to Witepsk, in Russia..."³ After the death of the Duchess he became the physician to the Russian Emperor, Nicholas I.⁴ By 1830, Trinius had abandoned allopathy in favor of homeopathy.⁵

In 1831, a controversial report was published on the poor results of homeopathic medicine used in Russian medical hospitals. The report concluded that homeopathic medicine was ineffective when compared to allopathic medicine. This resulted in a law being passed by the State Council in 1833, mandating that homeopathy could be used only in private practice, not in hospitals. A subsequent law had been proposed to forbid the practice of homeopathy entirely. The proposal was rejected and a special committee was formed to investigate the matter further. Trinius was appointed to the committee, exerting his influence in favor of the recognition of homeopathy in Russia. On September 26, 1883, the State Council accepted the committee's proposal and

allowed the practice of homeopathy and the establishment of homeopathic pharmacies in Russia.⁶

CARL BERNHARD TRINIUS ... WAS SAID TO HAVE BEEN SAMUEL HAHNEMANN'S FAVORITE NEPHEW.

His work as a botanist is well known. Trinius taught botany at St. Petersburg and later became the principal founder and first director of the Botanical Museum of St. Petersburg.⁷ He wrote 34 treatises and published a number of other important works. During his life he visited the most important botanical collections in the world on behalf of the Imperial Russian Academy.⁸

The C.B. Trinius Gramineae Herbarium, catalogued in 1994, is an important historical collection containing more than 8,000 sheets and over 1,200 specimens.⁹ The collection has been preserved at the Botanical Museum of St. Petersburg. In 1995, a plant genus of the Umbelliferae family was named *Trinia* in his honor.¹⁰

Carl Bernhard Trinius was awarded the Order of St. Stanislaus by Czar Nicholas I of Russia, as well as the order of St. Anna Second Class, the Russian order of chivalry. After suffering a series of strokes, Trinius died in St. Petersburg in 1844.

A collection of Trinius's poetry was published after his death. Gilbert shared with me a poem that Trinius wrote for Dr Samuel Hahnemann (see below). The poem evokes the deep affection, admiration and respect Trinius had for his uncle. The following lines reflect Trinius's wish for Hahnemann to be surrounded in heaven and in the future on Earth by those who are loyal to his work and teachings and by his homeopathic family.

“Will never fading, always new,
You also be surrounded by the false ring?
And loyally to the Ancestral line.
Shall the strength of the young branches entwine?”

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Myra Nissen, CCH, RSHom (NA) practices in Walnut Creek & Benicia, CA. She enjoys helping women achieve optimal health in body, mind and spirit. Myra graduated from the Pacific Academy of Homeopathy in 2006 and is a coach for students attending the Teleosis Homeopathic Collaborative in Boston, and is a Board Member of the Pacific Academy of Homeopathy. She runs the Homeopathy Every Day Study Group of Walnut Creek (www.HomeopathyEveryDay.com), which is affiliated with the National Center for Homeopathy. Contact her at www.MyraNissen.com

An meinen Oheim Dr. Samuel Hahnemann
Im Namen einiger Verwandten

Wir grüßen feiernd diesen Tag
Und legen, Vater, uns're Lieder,
Die unser Herz voll Andacht sprach,
Auf Deinen Altar betend nieder.
Und Jeder drückt in Deine Hand
Die Glut, die ihm im Herzen brannte,
Wir zieh'n um Dich ein liebend Band,
Wir Deinem Herzen nah Verwandte.

Wenn aller Zonen Blumenglanz
Die Schimmer seiner Lenze schickte,
Und Feen Macht mit reichstem Kranz
Den Altar Deines Festes schmückte;
Wird unverwelklich, ewig neu
Dich auch der falsche Kranz umringen?
Und um den Vaterstamm getreu
Die Kraft der jungen Zweige schlingen?

Sieh her, wie voller Jugendkraft,
Der Liebe Glanz in ihren Blicken,
Mit innig süßer Leidenschaft
Sich Deine Kinder an Dich drücken,
Und Deines Festes gold'nen Strahl,
Zu Gott gewandt die nassen Augen,
Und seiner Freuden hohe Zahl
Entzückt in ihre Seele sangen.

Wie dieser duft'ge Frühlingssohn,
Sanft angehaucht vom Geist der Liebe
In tiefen Kelchen, sprossend schon
Die Knospe bricht mit starkem Triebe,
(Die Erde hat im kalten Schoß
Vergebens seine Kraft gehalten)
Soll deines Lebens schönes Los
Mit junger Anmuth sich entfalten.

Und wenn, nach langgenoss'nem Glück,
Die Sonne, die Dein Haupt gebleichet,
Dereinst mit abendrothem Blick
Sich in die stillen Fluthen neiget,
So wird um das entblößte Haupt
Der Tochterzweige Laub sich schlagen
Und, dessen Segen Du geglaubt
Dich sanft in seinen Himmel tragen.

To my uncle, Dr. Samuel Hahnemann
In the name of a few relatives
by Carl Bernhardt Trinius

We greet this day celebrating
And place, father, our songs
Spoken devoutly from our hearts,
Down on your altar, praying.
And everyone pushes into your hand,
The blaze (passion), which burned in his heart,
We surround you in a loving circle,
We, the relatives close to your heart.

When all zones floral splendor
The glimmer of his years, sent
And fairies power with richest wreath
Adorned the altar of your celebration;
Will never fading, always new
You also be surrounded by the false ring?
And loyally to the Ancestral line
Shall the strength of the young branches entwine?

Look here, how full of youthful vigor,
The light of love in their eyes,
Intimately with sweet passion
Your children press to you,
And your firm golden ray
The moist eyes turned to God,
And the immense number of His joys
Delighted in their souls sang.

As this fragrant son of spring
Gently suffused by the spirit of love
In deep cups, already sprouting
The bud breaks with strong instincts
(The earth's cold bosom
In vain held his strength)
Should your life's beautiful lot
Tith young charm itself unfold.

And if, after long enjoyed happiness
The sun, that bleached your head,
Hereafter with a gaze of evening glow
Bends itself into the quiet waters,
Thus the bare head will be entwined
By the subsidiary branches of foliage
And, He whose blessing you believed in,
Carries you gently to His heaven.