

Witch 139, Mariette Malfourby 1

B 2199 no 4; witch 139, Mariette veuve Claude Malfourby, d'Amance

4 February 1616; informations preparatoires

(1) Claude Ferquel, laboureur d'Amance, 40

General reputation. At last harvest his wife was reaping oats, and saw Mariette approaching; she was gleaning as poor were accustomed to do. Wife said to her she should keep away from reaping, 'et qu'il vaudroit mieux qu'elle ayt a ayder a mettre les biens dedans que d'ainsy glanner'. On hearing this she left 'en grondant et fort murmurant'. 2 or 3 days later she fell ill, falling to the ground several times, and thought to be on point of death, so she was confessed and received sacraments. Mariette was told of this by a neighbour, to whom she said 'que ladite malade n'en mourrait, et que ce n'estoit une maladie pour en mourir.' Did begin to convalesce, then had a further illness, and was still in very bad state - thought this was doing of accused.

At last St Remy he and his daughter, reaping grain, had seen Mariette followed by a hideous little black dog: his hair stood on end, and when she saw them watching she tried unsuccessfully to drive the dog away by throwing stones at it. When asked where she was going, said to Lanfroicourt to see her son-in-law 'qui s'estoit laissé mourir'. Dog continued to follow her, and heard she had told la Bariziere she could not drive it off - suspected it had been her master.

(2) Jeanne, femme du precedent, 40

Already had long reputation as witch when she came to live there 2 years before. Was told by sieur Dattel, their master at time, that they would soon have new neighbour; when he named Mariette she objected that it would be better not to bring in such sorts of people, that she was reputed a witch, 'et que telles gens n'estoient propres, aupres d'un pauvre laboureur, qui ja avoit souffertes plusieurs pertes'. Later heard from la Bariziere that Mariette had heard of what she said, and was not content. Told same story about gleaning, followed by illness, which lasted 2 days. Hearing of Mariette's comments, said to her when they met 'que souvent elle avoit tenu tels propos, et que telle maladies provenoit de sorcieres et mauvaises gens qui luy faisoient de mal assez, mais que dieu avoit pitié d'elle et de ses enfantz.' 3 weeks later fell ill again, and thought she would die. During this illness Mariette wanted to make her bed, saying that she would not die; this made her believe she had given her the illness.

(3) Mongeatte, femme Drowat Thiebault, 23

General reputation; feared her and did not want her in their house.

(4) Drowat Thiebault, 30

Similar deposition.

(5) Izabel veuve Didier Barizien, 50

Had heard that her father and sister were strongly reputed to be witches; if she had known this would not have lived with her as she did before her arrest. Told of two occasions when she talked in her sleep. Once, in bed, she called out 'par le

non des, va t'en, sy tu es bien sage ne t'y retrouve plus' - explained she had been dreaming her son-in-law was in bed with her. Another time, in chair by fire, said 'Oye l'espaule, que tu ne charge ceste espaulle', putting her hand to shoulder - said she had dreamed something was hurting her shoulder. After arrest of la Villaume she became very fearful, asking witness to listen what people were saying when they came near. Said she would not fear being incriminated by her 'sy elle n'avoit esté et tous les diables avec elle'.

When she returned home in evening, would find her with her head in apron, saying 'qu'elle n'alloit en pas un lieux qu'elle n'y entende quelque fresche nouvelles, disant avoir entendu de tante Barbe, femme a Bastien Conta de ce lieu que quelques choses bransloit depuis qu'elle auroit esté a Lanfroicourt.' Witness then asked her about dog, and she said it had been black, with white belly and tail - had been unable to drive it away. Became frightened of her.

(6) Margueritte femme Daniel Houin, sergent, 40

Had several times heard her son-in-law Nicolas say she was a witch, alleging that she had righted a cart unaided on way to mill, and this must have been with help of her master. Suspected her over death of her father Pieron Boulengier; on day of death had been quite healthy, and set off for Dumont, where he drank a little wine. The returned by way of mill, where he stopped to arrange for milling of some corn. Drank a little more there, then left after dark; miller sent son to escort him past nearby stream. Next day was found dead a little way on other side, with no mark on body. He suspected that Mariette was stealing flour from him at mill, and witness thought she had caused his death.

(7) Melchior Bryant, portier, 42

General reputation, including suggestions by relatives, notably her son-in-law, who had said she was a witch and 'des plus maitresses'. 2 years before had asked witness to plead her case before prévôt when she wanted to come and live at Amance; after he refused had illness which kept him in bed for 10 weeks, unable to sleep or rest for 5 of these. Visited him 3 times, but he told her to go away - believed she had given him illness because of refusal.

(8) Philippe femme du precedent, 42

Had heard she was a witch since childhood. Her uncle Claude Tisselat dit Malfourby (her husband) had regretted marrying into such a family, and Mariette's father had only escaped being burned because he had died. 3 years earlier she had brought cart of her son-in-law, who was miller, through gate; face was black and swollen, so witness asked if he had done it. When she said he had not, replied that it must have been the devil in that case, to which she made no response. Same evening son-in-law came to house, and told how cart had overturned, then she had righted it unaided, although it should have taken a very strong man to do this. Thought her master the devil must have helped, and that she was a witch 'des plus fines'. Suspicions over husband's illness, following his refusal to speak for her; she had also complained that witness had spoken against her brother-in-law Claude Gerard, which was untrue.

(8 February 1616)

(9) Bietrix femme François Thierion, de Domp martin, 23

Common reputation. 3 years earlier her son-in-law had asked her husband to give him supper, which they did. Fell down as if dead, and had to be put to bed unconscious. When he started to recover, complained of Mariette and his wife, saying they gave him 'beaucoup de fascheries'. During night they came and banged on windows, asking if he was there; when told he was ill, said he should not get up early, because they had lost 6 pigs as if rabid, and they were going out to see if they could buy some others. Next day he complained of disaster, saying it had been at same time as he had collapsed, and claiming Mariette was a witch.

(10) Claudin Caillatte, vigneron de Grand Bouxieres, 75

General reputation. Had often heard son-in-law Nicolas Martin call her witch.

(11) Demenge Mengeot, vigneron, de Moulin pres Blanzey, 40

General reputation. 2 years earlier he and other subjects of M. du Tillon had been called on to guard mill where she lived with daughter and son-in-law; he had to provide them with food, and she was always complaining he was corrupt. Then was trouble about bucket he had borrowed, which had been seized as part of their goods, and some plates and 'franges de fillet' which his wife had bought at sale of goods. When they refused to return these she said proudly 'que mal proffict il en puisse faire'. Shortly afterwards his daughter, aged 9, fell ill with sickness which began in arm, then went through whole body. Tumours appeared no back, then turned into a hump, and she was all twisted and in pain, unable to find healing. At same time a younger daughter aged 3 fell ill, with illness which began in throat and behind ears; after languishing for long time had died 3 weeks earlier, reduced to skin and bone. Believed this had been her doing; had been to house when only children were there and touched their faces. They complained of this, saying she had red eyes and frightened them. When she met her witness asked why she had been to house rether than speaking to her when they met; was slow replying, so told her not to go to house again, at which she said they would repent.

(12) Catherine femme du precedent, 40

General reputation. Told of how she had touched children, one on arm and other under chin, saying 'voila des bel enfantz'.

Substitut for PG then asked for interrogation and confrontations.

12 February 1616; interrogation

Said she was 66, native of Warbach; had always worked around mills until she had come to Amance 2 years earlier, since when she had worked for others to gain honest living.

Agreed she had been accused by la Vilaume, and admitted that her late son-in-law had called her witch when angry with her. Denied story about gleaning, but admitted being followed by dog, which she drove off by throwing stones at it. Said father and mother had not been witches, but her grandmother had been burned.

As for remarks in sleep, once she had been dreaming, other time it was a gout which tormented her. Bruised face had resulted from lid of barrel which son-in-law had hit her with when beating his wife. Agreed she had tried to buy back 'franges', but had only said 'de par dieu' when refused.

12 February 1616; confrontations

No reproaches to witnesses. Admitted some circumstantial details, but nothing of importance. Had righted cart, but had hardly had anything in it; denied son-in-law had caused bruised face because she did not want to reveal his faults.

19 February 1616; PG (C.M. Rémy) asks for question ordinaire et extraordinaire

24 February 1616; Change de Nancy approves, with moderation suitable to her age.

2 March 1616; interrogation under torture

Given thumbscrews, rack, and strappado, but would confess nothing.

8 March 1616; interrogation

Goaler had informed judges that she now wanted to confess. Said she had been witch for 5 years, seduced when angry because son-in-law took some money she had. Was about to go into room to sleep when she was approached by an illusion in the form of a man, promising to give her money if she would believe in him. He was Persy, and gave her two 'cornets' of paper; all the night she was 'en soucy' and could not wait for day to see what was in them. Turned out to be empty, so she knew she had been abused, and threw them away. Later appeared to her in fields and gave her powder, but she threw this away.

Had been to sabbat 2 or 3 times - on foot by day. Had been dancing, and everyone was masked; had not stayed long, frightened that if her son-in-law noticed her absence 'il estoit assez galant pour la faire prendre.' Denied having made hail, received powder, or done any harm. Nevertheless expressed regret at having renounced God, and asked to be put to death for her faults.

9 March 1616; interrogation

Confirmed earlier confessions. Asked why she had not killed her son-in-law, who maltreated her, said that she did not want her daughter and grandson to die of hunger. Had kept Persy away by crossing herself and recommending herself to God every day; when she passed empty churches would go in and wash face with holy water, also sprinkling it on her breast.

11 March 1616; PG asks for death sentence

12 March 1616; Change de Nancy asks for renewed torture, during which she should be asked about maléfices and accomplices.

14 March 1616; interrogation under torture

After repeating earlier story, and denying several maléfices, admitting killing younger daughter of Demange Mongeot with grey powder given her by Persy. Had

also killed 6 pigs belonging to her son-in-law. Denied having been to sabbat more than 3 times, because she was frightened of son-in-law, who spied on her and would have had her arrested - had told Persy she consented to what they agreed. Was dancing at sabbat, and sometimes had to kneel before master and do him homage as if he were God. Had tried 3 times to have intercourse with her, but she refused, saying she had not been a whore in her youth, and did not intend to be one in her old age.

Was then racked, but only additional confession she made was that she had killed a horse belonging to her son-in-law. As for accomplices, only named 2 women already executed. Said her master had sought her consent to kill Ferquel's wife, but she refused, saying they were poor and had many children.

15 March 1616; Change de Nancy approves death sentence

17 March 1616; formal death sentence from court at Amance