

B 2211 no 1; witch 011, Margueritte femme Jean Estienne, d'Amance

3 March 1625; informations preparatoires

Taken at request of Adam de Vidrange, chambellan de Son Altesse

(1) Margueritte femme Demenge Huguenin le jeune, laboureur, 36

Recently had come to say that she had found one of their cows eating her cabbages, but it would not be like previous year. This cow and another fell ill within 3 or 4 days, and she warned the wife of the plaintiff, who sent for Marguerite and told her to visit them. Made soup, using oil of camomile which she crushed in pot, to treat first cow. Said that since second was still eating it would do well. Cow she treated died 2 or 3 days later, still gave good milk 3 hours after death. During this the accused told her she could not read or write, but had served a surgeon for 3 years, who gave her a piece of paper as large as a piece of cloth, on which there were pictures of all kinds of herbs. 'Et que quant elle avoit affaire de quelques choses, elle s'en alloit aux champs avec ladite feuille, disant avec les mains jointes, mon dieu de paradis et benoiste vierge marie enseigne moy toutes les herbes que je cherche. Ce fait elle trouvoit incontinent tout ce que luy estoit necessaire, adjoustant qu'elle scavoit beaucoup de bonne recepte, mais que sy elle s'en servoit l'on diroit incontinent qu'elle estoit sorciere.' Also told her 'qu'elle avoit adjourné devant les grant Juges, tous les gros d'Amance, qu'il n'y restoit que le sieur de Vidrange plaidant, mais en fin qu'il y estoit aussy adjourné avec les aultres, qu'ils seroient tous en enfers, et eulx bien estonnez de la veoir en paradis, et qu'ilz luy faisoient de place. Que ladite damoiselle femme audit sieur plaidant l'avoit esté querir pour veoir ladite vache et la traisne comme Judas fit nre seigneur que ladite damoiselle marchant devant comme Judas et qu'elle la suivoit comme nre seigneur. Que sy ledit Sr plaidant luy parloit encor de ladite vache et qu'elle fut sorciere, elle diroit qu'elle n'en scavoit que ce qu'il luy avoit aprins, et que sy elle estoit sorciere il l'estoit aussy, adjoustant aussy ha les meschans gens, ma fille fut travailler aux prey pour luy l'annee passee ils n'estoient pas encor payé.'

(2) Didier Martin dit Saulnier, paistre du Bourget d'Amance, 50

Long reputation. 18 months before had been with other pilgrims returning from Ste Raine, and as they approached Neufchâteau towards night she said they should go on, and she could go no further. Nevertheless found her on bridge next morning, and were so alarmed they all made sign of cross. Wife had refused her milk 14 years earlier, and cow promptly lost milk.

(3) George Guiart, cabaretier du Bourget d'Amance, 46

Long reputation. Story about pilgrimage. Also said that his daughter Françoise had said as they approached Chaumont that she thanked God she had recovered her health, but Margueritte told her she should be quiet and she was not cured yet. After this had abscess on throat which had to be lanced.

(4) Françoise fille du precedent, 14

Same story about her abscess.

(5) Jeanne femme Demenge Balatte, 24

6 months earlier had been expecting baby, and accused said she wanted to be present at birth. 3 or 4 days later had very painful labour, and baby was stillborn. Thought she saw her at window preventing birth because she had not been invited. Next day came to see her and expressed surprise that she had not heard; witness objected that she must have heard her crying out, since their rooms adjoined and even shared a window.

(6) Jeanne femme Claude Ferquel, 45

Had heard her suspected, and even called witch. 2 years earlier had been to cook bread in house where witness was ill; told witness 'qu'il y avoit loing temps qu'elle avoit envie de se jeter a elle ne fut esté l'empeschement de ses gens par ce qu'on luy avoit dict qu'elle la soubconnoit sorciere et luy avoit donné ladite maladie'. Around last St Remy had been collecting wood, and accused remarked that they had a lot of it; as she was carrying it into loft the plank twisted and she fell into a hole up to her neck, and was there all twisted for some time - believed this had been her doing.

(7) Laurence femme Laurent Blanc Didier, de Laistre, 27

At whitsun some 2 years earlier had been working in garden for mistress when she saw the accused in a great fright - said a snake had tried to attack her. Saw she was all wet from waist downwards, as if she had been in stream, but there was none near, and it was a fine hot day. Around previous St Remy had been collecting wood with accused, her husband, son and others, when it started to thunder. They all took shelter, but she went on her way - then they found her lying in path on her back, and she had to be picked up by her son and husband.

(8) Claudin Thieriet, charpentier du Bourget d'Amance, 30

Had heard her comment about cow of Demenge Huguenin, and seen her trying to lift it by its tail.

(9) Demenge Heuguenin le jeune, laboureur, 30

General reputation. Last harvest time her husband had asked him for a sheaf of barley in recompense for damage their cow had done in garden; then story of cow (which he leased from plaintiff) eating cabbages. Then story as told by wife; thought this was her doing.

(10) Claudon fille Claudin Fulpin, du Bourget d'Amance, 18

Had been to house on behalf of her mistress, wife of plaintiff, to ask about cow; she was not there, but saw her husband and cat which was jumping around him.

(11) Barthelemin Mansuin, vigneron, 32

Long reputation. Previous day was guarding her, while she warmed herself by fire because of great cold. Heard her say 'que le sieur plaidant estoit pire qu'un

Caiphas et qu'il falloit bien que le diable luy heut dict qu'elle estoit sorciere.' When he said the devil would not have said she was a witch unless it were true, she said she was a good woman, 'et que l'on entendoit bien des tesmoins pour faire mourir des gens, que le gibet estoit en enfer pour luy, et que sy elle estoit sorciere elle n'en scavoit que ce qu'il luy en avoit aprins'.

(12) Dion fille Parel Vilaume le vieux, lieutenant d'enseigne, 24

Also commented on remarks made previous day, although not so fully as previous witness - did mention Caiphas.

(13) Marie veuve Claudon Vosgien, du Bourget d'Amance, 60

Had heard reputation, but had seen no harm in her.

(14) Nicolas Bourca, fils Jean Bourca vigneron, 18

Story of pilgrimage; when they found her she claimed she had taken bed in a house, then had quarrel which caused her to leave in small hours.

(15) Jean Charton, manouvrier du Bourget d'Amance, 40

General reputation. Previous year had been guarding vines, and went out after nightfall. Saw accused placing face on ground, then picking herself up again, and repeating this. Although he suspected her of intending to steal, was frightened by this, made sign of cross, and went home.

(16) Bastien Conta, messenger de S.A. et sergent, 50

Reputation 20 years. 12 years earlier had been in service of late receveur at Amance, and caught her stealing grain from barn at night in her apron. Mistress gave her two or three blows, but took no further action.

Sieur Adam de Vidrange then came forward and said he had called her witch, accusing her of making his cow ill, and said he would have her burned if she did not heal it. She seems to have appeared at this point; admitted this had been case, and that she had made remark about cow eating cabbages, and things not being same as previous year.

(4 March 1625)

(17) Claude femme Nicolas Pierion, de Dommartin, 20

General reputation. 3 or 4 years earlier had been cutting grass for cows in garden when accused was passing nearby with load of washing on her head. Heard her call out in fright, and when asked what it was said a snake was chasing her - witness could see nothing.

(6 March 1625)

(18) Noble Jean Pierre Dattel, 31

9 or 10 months earlier horse had gone lame; in view of reputation and fact she was neighbour suspected her. Went and called her witch, accusing her of being cause, and threatening to have her burned if she did not cure it. Only reply was to tell workmen in his barn some time later that he did her wrong. Blacksmith came to see horse and found infected foot, which increased his suspicions. Previous year had piglet which was ill, and thought it would die, but asked servant to give it to accused to look after, promising to provide food. Heard from her daughter that she made it sleep on a skin with a cat; when girl came to fetch grain it followed her like a dog. When she was working in fields at harvest time took hens with her, which returned when she called them. Previous year had a cow whose leg was cut by a hatchet; butcher advised him that nerves were damaged and it would be hard to cure. Called in one woman who could do nothing, then asked accused, who succeeded in curing it, using herbs she collected at dawn.

(19) Jean de Loizey, forestier, 30

15 years earlier he and his late father had been to mill at Dommartin, and father had quarrel with her about who should go first. Ended up with his manhandling her, but when he put grain in something went wrong with machinery, and it was spilled. Thought this had been her witchcraft; had always heard her reputed witch.

6 March 1625; substitut for PG asks for interrogation and confrontations

11 March 1625; additional witnesses

(20) Izabeau femme Demenge Cottel, messenger au domaine, de Laistre, 37

Some 12 years earlier had gone to her house to ask for payment of a debt for bread (husband was also baker). When they were talking accused told her of occasion when she went home to check on child in cradle, and found it hanging in loft - then found woman dressed in white on bed. Admitted she could not now remember very well; thought she had added that her husband had hung cradle up in loft.

(21) Anne femme Nicolas Granice, de Laistre, 26

Similar rather confused story about child in cradle. Also story about having fox which attacked chickens of neighbours if they did damage.

Interrogation and confrontations appear to be missing.

24 April 1625; interrogation under torture

Asked why she had denied being witch after making voluntary confession; said it had been done out of fear. Said the holy ghost had visited her in form of white bird previous night and warned her she would be tortured.

When given thumbscrews said she was a witch, and had been seduced by Mre Cercelle 3 years earlier. Gave her money which proved to be oak leaves, and had intercourse with her. Had only been to sabat once - then said she had been every Thursday at 2 a.m. Evil spirit had asked her consent to make hail, but had always refused because she needed food. Had given her black powder, with which

she killed one of her own hens, but threw rest away.in fire, for which her master beat her.

Admitted it was her master who had visited her in prison. Now said he had given her powder 3 times; had also killed her cat, and a sheep which was ill. Had killed her nephew Cezar, aged 12, with powder in soup because he would not enter her service.

Asked about accomplices, identified Jean Bourca le vieux, saying she had known him by his trousers.

Confessed more maléfices. Had killed baby of Demenge Balatte by putting powder on floor of room, which his wife walked over and then miscarried. 2 years before Claude, wife of her cousin at Puletoy, had refused her some grain, and she used powder to kill a horse.

Was then racked and asked about accomplices, but would name no more.

Confirmed confessions next day.

25 April 1625; substitut asks for death sentence

26 April 1625; Change de Nancy approves. Formal sentence from court at Amance same day