

Witch 027, la Grande Marye 1

B 3323 no 3; witch 027, la Grande Marye, veuve Didier Sotterel, de Leintrey

20 March 1602; informations preparatoires

(1) Nicolas le Clerc, manouvrier, 44

When he was a child his father had quarrelled with her husband, and they were fighting when she interposed herself. His father called her witch, and she replied that in that case he was one too, threatening to take him to law. He responded with threats that he would have her burned and her goods confiscated; blamed subsequent loss of cows on her.

(2) Nicolas Chastey, manouvrier, 44

Long reputation.

(3) Allison, veuve Demenge Didier Gerard, 60

Reputation 20 years. believed her to have caused illness of late husband 18 years before - had to spend 9 weeks in bed with painfully swollen thigh, which finally healed on advice from her. No obvious motive - he merely remembered passing in front of her a day or two before falling ill.

(4) Claude Thomas, laboureur, 47

Long reputation. 21 years earlier, on occasion of devastating hailstorm towards end of harvest, had seen accused and 2 of her children acting strangely in fields as he rushed out to recover last of his grain. Each child held a 'vergatte' a yard long, but she turned her back on him, so he could not see if she had one too.

(5) Hellenix femme Demenge Conna, manouvrier, 40

Reputation 16 years (residence). Believed Marye had killed her daughter aged two 6 years earlier, after one of Marye's daughters was refused flour and butter because they were poor and lived by husband's work. The girl said they would repent, and 2 days later the child sickened, dying 2 weeks later.

(6) Nicolas Mongenan, marechal, 60

Reputation 30 years. 9 years before, after quarrels with accused, his wife had great pains in eyes and seemed likely to lose her sight. Only recovered after Marye had visited house, apparently uninvited, looked at eyes, and advised pilgrimage to Beau Bernard at Vic. Took her on cart, but she recovered well enough to return on foot. Marye then refused bread she was taken in sign of thanks, and sickness returned; was only cured after 2 further pilgrimages to Vic.

(7) Meline, femme Persin Hanry, laboureur, 40

Reputation 24 years (residence). Suspected Marie of causing death of son aged 8 some 7 years earlier. Desiring to take advantage of a pardon, she had sent child to church to see if curé was available to hear her confession. On way he met Marye, who asked where he was going; he replied 'En a tu assez, grande genoxe';

after this she chased him into house and beat him, he fell ill next day, and died a month later. During his illness witness saw a mysterious hare in the cemetery.

(8) Sebille fille Didier de Vacory, manouvrier, 24

Long reputation. Haunted her father's house and had evil reputation; suspected she had caused swelling of her arm 7 years earlier.

(9) Jennon femme Nicolas Mongenan, 60

Reputation 40 years. Repeated husband's story of trouble with eyes, which followed quarrel in which Marye had wrongly accused son of witness of theft from a third party. On advice of neighbours she sought her advice, but suggestion of pilgrimage came from witness and was approved by Marye.

(10) Jehenne Vannier, femme Henry de Frumesnil, manouvrier, 34

Long reputation. 10 or 11 years earlier was in service with son of Didier Colin at Embermesnil, and was invited to wedding feast of daughter of Jean Bon Claude with the late Nicolas Pierson. She had been invited as relative, but la grande Marye, who was aunt to one of those getting married, was not. On her way passed Marye's house 'habillée honestement selon sa qualité', and latter said 'qu'en mal griefve santé y puise elle entrer et en mal griefve santé retourner'. Duly fell ill 2 days later and had to return home out of her right mind; recovered after visiting Beau Bernard at Vic.

(11) Anthoine Grand Anthoine, tixerand, 43

Long reputation. 16 years earlier she had quarrelled with his wife, using threats, which were followed by stillbirth; also believed she had given wife an illness some 20 months later, in which her face became swollen and infected.

(12) Jean Breton, jeune homme à marier, 20

Long reputation. 10 or 12 years earlier his mother developed a painful hole in her foot, which tormented her until death 10 years later, and for which she blamed Marie.

(13) Meline femme Anthoine Grand Anthoine, 40

Long reputation. Repeated husband's story of quarrel, when accused declared herself to 'souhaiter que malencontre et malle fortune luy puisse advenir'. Placed swollen face 2 weeks later, followed by stillbirth. Her late sister had also believed that Marie made her ill after a quarrel.

(14) Odille, femme Claudon Grande Claude, 34

Reputation 14 years, since residence. Had been her neighbour for a year, and because Marie had disputes with woman with whom she lived, she had asked husband of witness to take her in sometimes. Witness opposed this because of her reputation, and she was angry - made a scene when she took other neighbour some

food in context of small exchanges of fruit in season. After they moved away had serious back pains, with which she was still periodically afflicted 3 years later.

(15) Jean Godel, manouvrier, 60

Reputation 18 years. 16 years earlier his wife had quarrelled with her, and they fought, after which wife became ill, troubled in her wits and behaving as if frenetic. Was less troublesome now, since age and illness had left her 'fort debille'.

(21 March 1602)

(16) Michel Hellenix, laboureur de Leintrey, 49

Long reputation. Some 27 years earlier heard her quarrel with another neighbour, la petite Didier 'avec beaucoup de menaces et d'injures l'une contre l'autre, tellement que ladite grande Marye comme fiere et de haulte courage qu'elle estoit, accourut droit à ladite petite Didiere qui alors estoit fort enceinte pour la battre et oultrager. Ce qu'apercevant luy deposant y accourut avec une hachette qu'il tenoit et l'en garda, pendant quoy il ouyt ladite grande Marye qui dict a ladite petite Didiere putain ribaulde de prebtre que tu es, tu as la pance pleine Mais je te promet que quand elle sera vide je te feray mener la plus beau train qu'oncques femme mena.' Ce qui advint ainsy, car ladite petite Didiere ne fust paravant sy tost delivree de son fruict, qu'encor plus soudain il luy print une maladie de laquelle elle devient toute frenetique et hors de son bon esprit, faisant des faicts que estoient la plus grand pitié d'elle que de femme qu'il vit jamais, et fut en tel estat pour le moins demy an durans, qu'il n'y avoit ny petit ny grand qui n'en print compassion.' He believed Marye had been responsible for this. Around same time his late father had several quarrels with household of accused's brother, the late Jean Bon Claude, and lost several horses within 2 weeks. Another horse sickened, and his mother was vainly trying to make it eat some grass when Marye heard her lamenting; she said all was not lost, and it might still recover, although it had fallen down. Family believed subsequent recovery was result of her touching it.

(17) Mengeotte veuve Pierson Grand Michiel, 60

Long reputation. 15 years earlier, depending on day labour for livelihood, she went to work for father of Demenge Grand Colas. Seeing Marye working there already, 'elle se doubta desja d'avoir querelle a elle, par ce qu'elle estoit fiere et haultaine comme il advint car peu apres ladite grande Marye commença de picquer de propos ladite deposante de maniere qu'elles avoient grande dispute par ensembles'. Marie threatened her 'de luy faire garder son feu plus de sept ans', and at next hay harvest she had an accident when loading cart - crippled and had to walk with a stick.

2 April 1602; interrogation

Said she was about 50, native of Leintrey, daughter of Ferry Jean Vannier and his wife Barbeline. Had been married for 20 years to Didier de Faulceray, marechal, who had died about 12 years earlier. Asked if Demenge Didier Renard had said she was a witch and that 'il la feroit brusler luy deust il couster tout son bien', she denied this. Remembered incident of great cloud when she had been in fields with children, but denied 'baguettes' and claimed to have brought them back to town

before any rain fell, holding one by the hand and carrying the other in a cradle on her head. Admitted she had beaten Poirson Halbry's son after he insulted her. Said her children had been to the wedding feast, and denied causing any harm to Jehenne on that occasion. Denied quarrel with wife of Anthoine Grand Anthoine, saying they were her best friends. Said of Didier, first wife of Gros Henry Margeron, 'qu'elle est morte bien pauvrement et couroit apres les prestres et les gens de guerre'. Denied a number of other quarrels.

4 April 1602; confrontations

Attacked Michiel Hellenix on grounds he had stolen corn belonging to local church. Said of Hellenix femme Demenge Conna 'que son mari et elle avoient formé des greniers pour prendre et rober du bled, et qu'elle tenoit le sac pendant que son dit mari fourroit et faisoit divertir audit grenier'.

In reply to Jean Breton said that his mother had suffered from 'mal St Anthoine' - her son had it too, in his leg, and they had made pilgrimages together. Accused Jehenne Vannier, femme Henry de Frumesnil, of having stolen a shirt, so that she was known as a thief. Jehenne denied this, but said she was 'bien forcé de laisser dire les meschantes gens comme elle'. Also accused Mengeatte femme Pierron Grand Michiel of stealing and cooking some geese - rather unconvincing half-denial in response.

Said that Claudon Thomas was damned for deposing as he had, since it was untrue, and accused Jean Gadot of stealing tithes.

13 April 1602; procureur fiscal asks for 'question extraordinaire'

14 April 1602; Change de Nancy agrees 'avec discretion et mediocrité requise'

17 April 1602; interrogation under torture

Racked and given thumbscrews, but denied all charges. Released after half an hour on rack for return after dinner - judges noted 'que l'avons trouvé fort oppiniastre et disposé a endurer tous tourmentz avec resolution de plustost mourir que rien confesser.'

After dinner placed on rack for further half-hour, with addition of tortillons, but continued to deny.

18 April 1602; interrogation

Called judges and offered to make full confession. Seduced 24 years earlier, after a quarrel with her husband. Said she had killed cow of Demenge Didier Renard because he called her witch, but had not caused his leg trouble, nor death of Demenge Colbay's daughter. Had caused eye trouble of Nicolas Marchal's wife, because latter accused her of stealing an écu, and killed son of Poirson Halbix after he insulted her. Denied various other maléfices, but admitted causing back trouble of Odille femme Claudon Grand Claude 'en hayne de ce qu'elle ne luy donna point de ses tartes aux prunes'.

Admitted going to sabat, but denied making resolutions 'de mal faire' - said that since she was poor she wanted to preserve the crops (form of question did not require this answer). Only people she had recognized at sabat were la Jobarde and Mathieu Margeron.

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19 April 1602; procureur asks for death sentence

20 April 1602; Change de Nancy approves, subject to final confirmation of confessions

26 April 1602; confirmed earlier confessions

27 April 1602; execution took place