

B 8667 No 2 Witch 140, Catherine Malremmeix

24 July 1592; informations preparatoires contre Catherine, veuve de Claude Malreannaix of Saint Margarée, accused by Laurence, wife of George Tolbay.

(1) Mengeatte femme Colas Henry de La Fosse, c. 45 (living at St. Margarée)

Three years before had obtained guard of 'la harde des fosses'; the accused had asked her to relinquish it in favour of her husband and herself, which she had refused. Soon afterwards, when in fields guarding the 'harde', felt a sudden blow on leg, although there was no-one near her. Fell to ground, and was unable to walk for 8 days; felt after-effects for a year. Some 3 weeks after pains had ceased, her daughter (of marriageable age) fell ill, trouble beginning at soles of feet. Died after languishing miserably for 18 months 'laissant et monstrant signes evidents, qu'elle avoit esté ensorcelée, parce qu'approchant sa mort elle jettoit par la bouche, des araignes et aultres bestes de ceste espece, vifves, en jetta aussy par les narines.' Suspected these 'infortunes' to be result of witchcraft by accused, who was commonly suspected as a witch.

(2) Jehennon femme Claudon George de Sainte Margarée, c. 30

A year ago at previous Christmas, they had owed Catherine a resal of wheat as rent for a field; it had been seized from them by Colas Avereu in settlement of a debt Catherine owed him. She still pressed them for payment, and a day or two later a child fell ill at noon and was dead by the evening; thought this was her doing, in view of reputation and dispute.

(3) Colas Avereu de Sainte Margarée, c. 36

Told story of having taken wheat from Claudon George to pay debt the accused owed him (3 bichots). Soon afterwards horse became lame in one leg 'dequoy appercevant, Il considera en soy mesme qu'il avoit mal fait d'avoir prins querelle contre ladite Malreannatte, qui n'est entre eulx en aultre estime que d'une sorciere, et pour y remedier, Il luy quicta sa debte se deporta de ladite saisie par luy requise, et luy fait donner du laict, quand elle venoit à sa maison, surquoy sondit cheval se porta bien . . '

(4) Demenge Perry de Sainte Margarée, c. 22

At harvest time previous year, his horse had strayed into field of wheat where Catherine was reaping; 'elle s'en courrouca et luy dit, Que c'estoit moult mal fait, de gaster ainsi le bien de dieu'. Horse became ill next day and soon died; suspected Catherine, who was commonly reputed a witch.

(5) Barbeline veuve Jean Wanier, de Sainte Margarée, c. 40

Previous September the accused had asked her for some wool from their sheep for 'un bas de chausse'; witness refused, saying 'qu'à la verité elle n'en auseroit point donner, parce que c'estoient brebis qu'elle tenoit de maitre, et avoit tousjours ouy dire, que les brebis devoient estre gouvernées aussi justement, que les mouches a

miel.' During winter two of best sheep died; on hearing of accusation against Catherine, she suspected her of having caused this.

(6) Mengeon Valentin de Sainte Margaré, c. 36

Some 5 years before had refused a 'quarteron d'avoine' to accused, and soon afterwards a cow worth 18 ecus had died suddenly. Had suspected her of causing this, on account of common reputation.

(7) Jean Perry de Saint Margaré, c. 25

Two years before Catherine's husband had helped him with hay harvest; she had come to ask for his day's pay, but witness told her husband owed him some money, and they would have to reckon up in a few days to see who was the one in credit. A few days later a child became ill, and was still in a poor state, unable to support itself on its legs. Her reputation made him suspect her.

(8) Jean Wanemont de Sainte Margaré, c. 29

Around last hay harvest, Catherine had asked for loan of a horse to bring some fruit from village of Malreanneix; he had refused, because he had so much work to do carting from fields. Next day, as his wife was bringing cart and horses back to village, they bolted in fright for no reason, and ran into a man carrying a sickle on his shoulder - one of the horses had its leg 'coupée' by the sickle. Suspected Catherine in view of her reputation. Some 6 weeks later Catherine came to house asking his wife for loan of 'fillet' and other things, which were refused; fine calf died soon afterwards. Had also lost a fine cow, some two years before, after Catherine's son had left him 'un veillon de maitre' against her will.

(9) Le maire Claude le Bailly de Saint Margaré, c. 50

Previous year Catherine had helped him reap, and for her payment 'faisait grande instance' that she wanted the largest of seven piglets which were already big. Finally gave her one of the middling sized ones; as soon as she had taken it the largest one died, followed next day by two next largest. In view of reputation dating back seven years, suspected her of causing this.

(10) Didier George le Clerc de Sainte Margaré, c. 30

Previous year had contracted with Catherine's last husband Mauriche to plough a field, which was her property. After making deal, husband said 'Qu'il estoit grand bruict qu'on vouloit prendre sa femme pour sorciere, et sy d'aventure, elle estoit apprehendée demandoit s'il auroit ce qu'il vouloit ensementer sur l'adit champ, disant en plus, qu'il se craindoit fort qu'elle estoit sorciere, parce qu'a ceux qui ordinairement l'appeloient sorciere et Genauxe, elle ne laissoit le lendemain leur donner le bon jour, sans aultrement s'en formaliser Qu'il eut beaucoup mieulx valu à luy, le jour qu'il l'esposa, de prendre ung loup par la queue, qui luy eut mange le bras Jusques au coude que d'avoir sa compaignie et que jamais il ne demeureroit avec elle de faict tost apres Il s'en alla à la guerre, et y a esté mort.

Some 8 days before a foal belonging to her son had got into his field; had chased it out saying 'qu'au diable soit le poulain et son maitre'; at same hour next day one of his bulls became as if rabid, then returned home unable to stand - he expected to find it dead on his return.

(11) Claudon George de Wanemont, living at Saint Margerée, c. 35

Repeated wife's story of dispute over payment of wheat, and death of 5 year old child.

(12) Catherine femme Mongeon Valentin de St. Margarée, c. 30

Three years before had lost a fine cow and the two calves she was carrying, after refusing to sell the accused some oats; in view of her 'grand bruict' had always believed her responsible. Had another loss (word missing) previous February after refusing loan of salt she wanted for cooking.

(13) Magdelaine femme Jean Wanemont de Saint Margarée, c. 30

Reputation as long as could remember. Had lost a sheep that March after refusing Catherine some wool. Repeated husband's story of losing cow after accused's son had left him lease of another cow, and of accident to horse with scythe. Said she had three times had 'grand travail d'enfant', and had aborted. Suspected accused of causing all these 'fortunes'.

(? 26 July 1592) Interrogation

Said she was about 45, widow of Claude Malremmeix, currently married to Mauriche Harauze, who had gone to the war; didn't know if he were alive or dead. Had left at last St. George's day, voluntarily 'parce qu'estans pauvres, il ne pouvoit fournir en rencons'. She had previously been a widow for about four years.

Agreed to much circumstantial evidence, but denied doing any harm. Said that wheat seized by Colas Avereu had been wrongly taken, because it was in respect of debts owed by her children. Denied asking for wool to make 'bas de chausse' - when she needed these she bought them at market. As for death of two sheep, she had not caused this, 'et quand ung voisin perd, l'autre n'y a pas beaucoup de proffit.'

Asked if 'comme elle se dit bonne Chrestienne, elle a tousjours heu bonne fiance en dieu, et sy quelques fois le bon dieu, en ses miseres et pauvreté, ne l'a reconforté, par quelque bonne vision d'ung de ses anges, comme Il a coustume de faire à ses esleuz.

Dit que le bon dieu ne l'a jusques icy delaissée, par la bonne devotion qu'elle ait heu a luy. Et luy a bien envoyé du bon reconfort .

Comment et en quelle maniere, elle a receu ce reconfort.

N'a voulu dire, qu'elle at heu rencontre ou bien vision quelconque mais que c'a esté en son esprit qu'elle a esté allegée.'

Agreed that she had been dissatisfied about cow her son had passed over to Jean Wanemont, because she had looked after it through winter. But had done no harm to Wanemont on this or other occasions, because he was 'bon voisin' to her, and they had never done one another harm.

Had taken a pig in payment from maire Claude le Bailly, but unwillingly, because he had no money with which to pay her - pig had been valued at a franc.

After some more denials, the judges told her she was assuredly damning herself, and then produced Laurence, wife of George Tolbay, to make her accusation. She said that 'la Malremmatte' had been second in the dance, after 'la Stablatte', and had been accompanied by Mre Persin - third had been wife of Colas Cui from Faing.

'Et a advisé et exhorté ladite Malremmatte de ne se faire rudier comme elle a faict que ce n'est que rosée, des presens interrogats.

Ladite Malremmatte auparavant gazouillant à plaisir, a perdu la parole, ayant ladite Laurence ainsy parlée, Et à la continuation, du maintien de ladite Laurence, elle a dit que ceste accusation, provient par hayne de ce qu'elle n'a voulu donner sa fille a son fils, et qu'elle l'a heu menacé en cest occasion.'

31 July 1592; confrontations

Made no objection to any witness, and generally agreed their stories, but denied any witchcraft or harm done by her. In reply to Jean de Wanemont, said 'que les fortunes viennent comme Dieu les envoie'.

4 August 1592; Change de Nancy approves question extraordinaire.

14 August 1592; interrogation

Started by repeating denials, then said she had been to sabbat once, some 6 weeks before. Asked who had taken her, said God had - called a liar, then admitted it had been Mre Persin. Confessed to killing one or two animals, but no people. Was then racked, and started further series of confessions. Had been seduced about two years before, in the time of her last husband 'par lequel elle estoit sy mal traictée, qu'elle se desesperoit'. Had been to sabbat on mountain of Ramberg, where it had been agreed at last Easter to make hail to spoil the grain crop. Those present included Mathieu Blaise, Demenge Simonel of Sainte Margarée and his wife, the wife of Colas Cuin, and the wife of George Tolbay. After describing sabbat, said she had also seen Demenge Milan of Remomeix, and the wife of Peu de Cuyr, dite Podecatte. Subsequently added wife of Claudon George.

Interrogation came to a close when she became silent, except to reply to all questions that God was her master - judges clearly thought this diabolical, reasonably enough since she had previously attributed earlier silence to presence of Persin behind her ear.

Questioned again in afternoon, repeated confessions, but denied having committed any other malefices; begged judges to have pity on her, and not force her to say things that were not true. Repeated accusations, with exception of Demenge

Simonel, whom she had accused 'par haine', and Demenge Milan. Judges suggested that she had been wrong to accuse Mathieu Blaise, but she stuck to this. Was confronted with Jehennon widow of Peu de Cuyr, who was in prison, and maintained accusation against her.

17 August 1592; interrogation

Confirmed confessions, rejecting suggestions that other accusations must also be true. Now withdrew more accusations, leaving only those against Mathieu Blaise, the wife of peu de Cuyr, and the wife of Colas Curien.

22 August 1592; death sentence from Change de Nancy

24 August 1592; further confirmation of confessions and accusations.