

Witch 183, Didielle Simmonel 1

B 8682 no 5; witch 183, Didielle femme Demenge Simmonel, de St Marguerite

Accused by Claudette femme Jean Parmentier.

7 May 1598; informations preparatoires

(1) Mengeon Demenge Henry alias d'Anould, 36

Long reputation.

(2) Colas Demenge Henry alias d'Anould, 32

Long reputation.

(3) Claudon Bonipaire, 34

Missing section of doc, but very short.

(4)

General reputation.

(5) Simon Hougney, 32

Long reputation.

(6) Jean le Clerc, 40

Long reputation. 5 and a half years earlier wife had been at feast in Didielle's house, and taken by sudden illness; her husband enquired after her from servant, and when told she was in danger of death told his wife to take her something. Was then evidently cured after a gift of pears.

(7) Jean Didier Chenemere, 40

General reputation.

(8) Claudon le Clerc, du Faing, 40

Reputation several years.

(9) Colatte femme Vincent Henryat, du Faing, 50

Long reputation - of her and her husband.

(10) & (11) Missing - very short.

(12) Jean Parmentier, 30

Long reputation, as had husband.

(13) Jean Charpentier, 36

Long reputation.

(14) Mengeon Didier l'Hoste, 33

Long reputation, as had husband.

(15) Jean Mulnier, 32

Long reputation, as had husband.

(16) Jennon femme Jean le Clerc, 30

Same story as husband about illness, and cure by pears and apples. Long reputation.

Husband then testified again, to effect that 7 years earlier she had thrown either an apple or a pear at a large sow which went in front of her house. Animal ate this, fell ill, and died next day - thought she had given it some poison in view of various disputes they had had. Also suspected her over death of a mare and foal.

(17) Jennon fille Jean Jacot de la Taxerandrie, 25

Had been servant to Jean le Clerc at time of wife's illness; she had been very reluctant to go to feast at all, because of her suspicions. Was forced to eat something she did not want (apparently 'des millots dans une escuelle'), immediately felt great pain in whole body. When Didielle's husband asked her how her mistress was she said she was likely to die, and if she did so 'il en viendroit du grand mal'. Started to recover immediately she ate pear, and was better next day, so they felt certain it had been Didielle's witchcraft.

(18) Claudette fille Claudon Colat, de la Vacherie, 30

A year earlier had been in service of Jean Petit Jean of St Marguerite. A cow became sick, and was given salt to lick (not clear by whom), after which witness said 'qu'au diable soient tant de sorcieres, qu'elles vouloient appauvrir son maitre'. Immediately had pains in ankles, and had to take to her bed; later went up as far as loins, and after 2 months went back to father's house. Finally cured after obtaining bread, salt, and ashes from her house. Believed she had bewitched her; general reputation.

20 July 1598; interrogation

Said she was about 46, and had been married to Demenge Simonel, executed a few days earlier, for 25 years. Agreed he had accused her of being accomplice, but denied this. Went on to say 'qu'elle tient asseurement qu'on luy donnera la question, et que par ce moyen elle dira qu'elle a esté au diable en ses sabats, et qu'elle est sorciere' - nevertheless she was as innocent as God and the Virgin. Was accused of blasphemy for this, but insisted that if she was a witch they must be too.

Denied all charges. Was told she had been suspected for 25 years, as her mother had been before her. Admitted she had long reputation, but said they did her wrong, as they had done her mother.

Subsequently confronted with the four principal witnesses; no reproaches, but maintained her innocence.

22 July 1598; procureur d'office, noting that she has been accused by 5 separate persons, asks for question ordinaire.

24 July 1598; Change de Nancy approves

13 August 1598 (?); interrogation under torture

Started to confess when racked. Seduced 18 years earlier, when she went out into garden at night to relieve herself. Approached by man in black who pretended to be rich merchant from Germany who had lost his way, and offered her money for a kiss. Then asked her to renounce God; she tried to fight him off and run away, but he covered her mouth and threatened to cut her throat. She then gave way, and after renouncing God he pinched her behind her head, said his name was Persin, and threw her down to have intercourse with her. Before he left told her to be at same place at same time 3 days later.

On return gave her powder - black/kill, white/cure. Told her she would be fetched later for sabat; this was done by Demenge Millan, and there were so many men and women present she did not know number. Only others she recognized were Didier de la Ruelle of Saulcy and Claude Tendon and his wife from Chanoy, already executed. Usual dancing and feasting. Tried powder out on own pig and horse, which died.

Confessed to having made 'bonne amyie' ill because she had beaten servant, then felt sorry and healed her with powder on apples. Had also made a servant who angered her sick 8 or 9 years earlier, then healed her - just in time. 3 years earlier a poor beggar woman took something from her garden, then came to warm herself a few days later, so she gave her powder in a bowl of milk.

Asked about illness of Claudette fille Claudon Collatte, said she had caused this because of her remarks about witches. She had already bewitched the cow in question, then the girl came to borrow a hatchet, and sat down to warm herself by fire. She put some powder between fingers, and rubbed her feet while pretending to attend to fire; they then started to feel as if they were burning. Had intended to cure her if she had not returned home, but was cured after getting substances from house.

Admitted making cow of Jean le Clerc ill, then curing it with white powder in salt; also killed his sow which damaged her garden. As for his wife, claimed it was her husband who had made her ill. Said she had given Persin a hen each year, so that she only had to go to sabat once a year, and not commit as many maléfices as other witches. General sabat was around St George each year, and all the nearby witches had to go - always in same place near bois de Bozey. Added to list of those she had seen Claude Tendon's daughter, wife to Jean Bonipaire, Didier Pierrat of la Ruelle de Saulcy, already executed, George le Clerc of Taintrux (or Chenoy), whose beard was already white, and Jacot du Paire of St Marguerite.

At annual sabat elected a maire and a doyen each year, whom they were obliged to obey. 8 or 9 years earlier Demenge Milan had been maire, and Didier Pierrat doyen; succeeded by George le Clerc and George Simon of Xinfaing (already executed). Officers always sat next to Persin and reported on anyone who did not obey them. Told of hail-making, using white sticks given them by Persin; beat water, 'soubdain s'eslevoit une nuée en l'air avec de la gresle, qui estoit conduit par lesdits officiers, qui estoient levez en l'air les premiers et les autres sorciers apres. Ce

Witch 183, Didielle Simmonel 4

pendant elle detenue, et les aultres femmes, demeuroident sur le lieu, et faisoient la cuisine attendant que les hommes fussent de retour pour banqueter'.

Confirmed confessions and accusations next day, adding name of another man already executed, Colas Viney of le Faing. Said she had last seen master in May, when he came to tell her she must go to sabat with others, because she gave him too little to be exempted.

14 August 1598; interrogation

Further confirmation of previous confessions.

14 August 1598; procureur d'office asks for death sentence. Subsequently confirmed by Change de Nancy.

26 August 1598; sentence carried out.