

Witch 311, Jennon Simon 1

B 8735 no 4; witch 311, Jennon femme Bastien Jean Simon de Raon

15 April 1624; informations preparatoires

(1) Nicolas Liebault de Raon, 52

Some 6 years earlier his late wife had great quarrel with Jennon over some nuts; she ran after witness in street and gave him great blow on the back, saying 'que par la mere dieu qu'elle feroit manger le bien de sa femme en mal santé', to which he replied 'que sy telle chose arrivoit il y auroit assez pour la faire brusler'. 2 years later wife became ill, as if out of her wits, and he took her to St Hiedulph at Moyenmoutier. Accused told his daughter Alizon that this would do no good, but that she should go to Vic and make neuvaine to Be Bernard, after which one would see whether it was an illness given her to kill her or not. Hearing this from his daughter and several others, followed advice, but she died a month after returning to Raon. Whole affair was very expensive for him, and he had later called her witch several times with no reaction. Widely suspected, and her father had been chased out of Epinal under suspicion, as had her uncle from Blamont. About 18 months earlier George Grand Colas had fallen ill, and had told witness that he was victim of same witch as his wife, naming Jennon; said he would have her burned if he recovered, but had died.

(2) Babillon veuve Grand Colas de Raon, 72

Told of illness of her son George Grand Colas some 18 months earlier. Had refused to cart some wood for her, and she was angry; then met him out with cart, and complained that he was carting for others, asking if her money was not as good as theirs. He said he did not want to cart for her at all, to which she replied 'que quant il y voudroit aller, qu'il n'y iroit plus'. Became very ill, saying he was 'frappé a mort' and that she had given him the illness; died after three and a half months, blaming her. Reputation 6 or 7 years. Some 3 or 4 years before had heard Catherine fille Demenge Guillard blame her for illness from which she died, claiming to have seen her near her bed.

(3) Catherine femme Gerard Godat drappier de Raon, 32

Some two and a half months earlier went to Jennon's house in quest for some wool which her son had thrown out of a window (were neighbours), but she started to swear by the devil that she did not have it. Before she withdrew Jennon touched her on left side, and within 3 days she became so ill she thought she might die; was still unable to walk properly and vomiting bitter and poisonous stuff. Believed that if she were the witch she was reputed she had caused this.

(4) Dedie femme Nicolas Liebault, 50

Some 3 years earlier her daughter Catherine, aged 17, fell very ill. During illness often called her to bed saying that Jennon was there, and blamed her for

illness, from which she died after two and a half months in a strange fashion, all dried up.

(5) Claudette femme Nicolas Guerard de Raon, 25

Some 5 years earlier Jennon had come up to her and accused her of calling her witch, and getting a small boy to repeat this to her, which she denied. Jennon insisted, saying she was 'assez meschante comme aussi sa soeur' - then incident of blow to back of father (first witness). Then told story of fatal illnesses of her mother and her sister Catherine.

(6) Claudon Champestre tailleur d'habits de Raon, 36

Some 16 years before on first marriage had told his wife not to keep company with Jennon, their neighbour, because she was 'fort dangereuse a desrober et estoit soupconnee pour sorciere'. Some 6 years later wife died (with baby) in childbed; he himself was terrified when an animal like a cat walked over him at night. Effects lasted 5 or 6 years, so that he was 'grandement offense en son interieur, veoire mesme en ses commoditez'. Since second marriage 4 years earlier had similarly forbidden second wife to haunt her, and believed that if she were a witch she had caused his misfortunes.

(7) Margueritte femme Nicolas Laurent de Raon, 25

When working at Jennon's house 3 months before, had heard her say that she hated Nicolas Clement drappier, and 'qu'il y avoit longtemps qu'elle pourchassoit a luy faire quelque desplaisir, et qu'en effect elle en avoit venu au bout, et que ledit Clement avoit bien autant de commodite que le sr Nicolas de Lusse que cela ne luy feroit rien du tout et ne luy dureroit.' Also told how Gerard Chodat's wife had asked her to obtain bread, salt and ashes to make herself a soup to cure her; did so but didn't know what use she made of them.

(8) Jennon veuve George Grand Colas de Raon, 30

Told of husband's illness; had expressly forbidden witness to let her into the house. During illness Jennon said to her 'que c'estoit grande pitie dudit feu George et qu'il luy coustoit son bien qu'il vaudroit bien mieux qu'il decedast que de languir de la sorte' - soon after this he died.

(9) Alizon fille Nicolas Liebault, 18

Told story of threat to father and mother's illness. Also reported illness and suspicions of Catherine fille Demenge Guerard.

(10 April 1624)

(10) Barbe femme Claudon Raguin, 26

As neighbour she had done accused much good, since she was poor and had many children. Some 3 weeks before her daughter Catherine had visited house and fallen ill, blind and deaf, unable to speak, died within 24 hours. Had great suspicion that if she were witch she had caused this.

(11) Claudette veuve Demenge Barbouiller de Raon, 60

Some 4 years earlier her daughter Claudette had married Nicolas Hugo, brother of the accused. She was subsequently told by Barbe Braconnier that Jennon had said the witness 'n'avoit donne une grippe a son marit lors des espousailles', and that 'sadite fille n'auroit bien ny joye avec son frere de plus de sept ans'. Indeed they had 'mené mauvais mesnage', so that daughter had left to go into service, and if Jennon were witch suspected her of causing this.

(12) Barbe Braconnier boulangiere de Raon, 55

Essentially story as above, but different version of comments. She had allegedly said 'que ladite Claudette n'avoit tant vullu que de donner une grippe a Bastien Jean Symon son marit, mais que cela luy cousteroit beaucoup davantage que ladite grippe, qu'elle en auroit souvenance, et qu'elle s'en repentiroit'. Made her very suspicious; reputation more than 4 years.

(13) Jean Villemin bouchier de Raon, 42

Told of illness of George Grand Colas, and that of Nicolas Liebault's wife.

19 April 1624; interrogation

Said she was Jennon Hugo, femme Bastien Jean Symon, living at Raon, aged around 40. Was native of Epinal, father was Huguenin Jacquot tailleur d'habits, mother's name was Prinson, both parents long dead. Had lived at Epinal until about to be married, when she moved to Blamont for 3 months; stayed there 6 months after marriage, then 6 months at Lorquin before coming to Raon 17 years earlier.

Admitted some disputes with neighbours, naming Estienne Jacques, wife of Jean Villemin, and Claudatte fille Nicolas Liebault. Knew she was accused of witchcraft, but declared her innocence.

Admitted quarrels with Liebault and his wife, but denied threats attributed to her, or being called witch. Also agreed to dispute with George Grand Colas, but again denied doing him any harm.

Agreed that she had told Alizon Liebault that if her mother was ill through witchcraft, or had been given illness, they should take her to Vic. Admitted saying that she hated Nicolas Clement, because he was a liar and 'taschoit de la dechasser', but denied threats.

Agreed that Catherine Raguin had been in her house, and 'luy feit jetter beaucoup de larmes pour autant qu'elle n'avoit de quoy a manger et donner a ses enfants'. Over marriage of her brother, said that her husband had not had any 'rabat' like the others, so that she lost much - but had done no harm.

19 April 1624; confrontations

Admitted that when arrested she had said she was a witch, but that had been to avoid 'la rigueur des prisons'; now denied it absolutely.

Claudon Champestre added story that a week earlier his son Jacques had been fighting with her children, and she had come out and pretended to groom one of her children; boy fell ill, and was still in danger of death.

No other results from confrontations, and no reproaches to witnesses.

24 April 1624; Change de Nancy approves question ordinaire et extraordinaire

26 April 1624; interrogation under torture

Was given thumbscrews on hands and feet, then racked. Said she was witch, asked to be released, but then denied again - was still on rack, eventually promised to tell truth and was taken down. Said she had been seduced by Maitre Joly 15 years before, on way back from fair of St Epvre at Baccarat; was angry because she had been unable to get husband out of tavern and was returning alone. Sitting down and lamenting 'a l'endroit de la haute justice de Baccarat' was approached by large man in black with feet like those of an ox. Had her renounce God, but no sexual approach; 'money' turned out to be oak leaves. Visited her again a month later and gave her three kinds of powder, black, yellow, and white; to kill people, kill animals, and make ill respectively.

Admitted killing wife of Nicolas Liebault, because daughter Claudette had angered her by calling her a witch. Had also killed George Grand Colas and made Catherine femme Gerard Codat ill. Denied causing death of Catherine fille Demenge Guibard, or illness of Jacques fils Claudon Champestre. Agreed she had killed Catherine fille Claudon Raguin when angry because she had brought her no bread; later regretted this greatly because her mother 'luy faisoit grande charité'. Denied being cause of trouble between Nicolas Hugo and his wife.

Told of going to sabbat in very conventional terms. Had seen veuve Barret, already executed, her sister-in-law Margueritte daughter of late Jean Symon, and Didier Chaudron (who had fled). Later arranged to give master a black hen every year to be excused attendance.

27 April 1624; interrogation

Confirmed earlier confessions.

29 April 1624; Change de Nancy approves death sentence

2 May 1624; interrogation

When asked for formal confirmation of earlier admissions so that judges could pass final sentence, said they had been false, and she was 'femme de bien'; if she had to die she would do so as such. Judges reminded her of danger to her soul, and suggested that she could not have invented all the circumstantial detail she had provided, but she continued denials.

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4 May 1624; interrogated again, with same result

21 May 1624; brought out of prison again and pressed to tell truth, but persisted in denials.

30 May 1624; Change de Nancy recommends that death sentence be carried out

8 June 1624; formal death sentence by court at Raon