

B 4098; witch 075, Esdeline veuve Thoussaint Tarrion, de Charmes

June 1611

She was suspected of having caused the death of 3 children of the apothecary, Mr Jean Gros Jean, after touching them while they were dancing under the town hall of Charmes. According to one child she had forced them to take the hands of her own child, saying that the rich and the poor must dance together. 2 of the children fell ill immediately after return and died within 2 weeks, the other languished for some time. During this period Esdeline tried to help in curing her - which her father was evidently incapable of doing - suggesting the use of a prayer to God, the Virgin, and an unknown saint, which should be given to the first beggar who came to the house. The child eventually died none the less.

Many witnesses reported that Esdeline was suspected of murdering her mother-in-law, who had been under suspicion as a witch, and had been found dead in her bed, possibly strangled, at the moment when a case might have been brought against her. Further accusations that she had been the 'garce' of a soldier when there had been a garrison at Vaudemont, that she was a thief and a cutpurse, and a quarrelsome loudmouthed woman. Many witnesses, however, said they had no reason to believe her a witch, and that they would have been more suspicious of her dead husband, let alone her mother-in-law. It seems evident that rumours had only begun to circulate after the death of the apothecary's children, although one or two other accusations eventually surfaced; several witnesses took this point. They also said that they had frequently quarrelled with her, yet no harm had come to their families or their animals.

One witness, Idatte femme George Martin, charpentier de Charmes, 50, testified 'que comme voisine de ladite Esdeline elle a heu plusieurs querelles avec elle, jusques a s'entre battre et neanmoins ne luy est arrivé, ny en son bestail aucun mal, et estime que sy ladite Esdeline estoit sorciere qu'elle luy auroit faict desplaisir, estant d'un tres mauvais vouloir, et de parole avantageuse ayant menassé de la noyer ou luy donner un coup de cousteau a cause de quelque dispute qu'elles avoyent heus par ensemble'. Went on to accuse her of theft, and of having reputation of having been 'un parfaite putain'.

When another witness 'plaignoit son enfant ladite Adeline en riant fort luy dit qu'il ne falloit tant prier dieu, a quoy respondant la deposante luy dit, qu'elle l'avoit bien peu prié, et que si elle l'eut prié davantage comme elle doibt paravanture que telle fortune ne luy fusse arrivé. Surquoy ladite Adeline repliquant dit ces motz non faict ma foy car tant de gens le prient, en est sy fort importuné qu'il n'oyt pas tout le monde, mais qu'il le falloit prier un peu aujord'huy et un peu demain, et que l'enfant seroit guery'. She had previously said that the child 'etoit attenué de mal de sainct'.

During interrogation said she was 33, and that her father Pierat Masson of Saxou soubz Vaudemont was still alive, but 'des son jeune age sondit pere s'estant remarié se voyant surchargé de sa maratre l'abandonna petite qu'elle estoit avec un sien frere nommé Nicolas et s'en alla mendier sa vie par le monde jusques a ce qu'elle eust la force de servir maître . . . qu'ayant mendié sa vie l'espace de trois ou quatre ans, elle s'aresta a Grimont pres Epinal'. After this served various masters before returning to father's house and finally marrying - marriage lasted 14 years. Denied that she had misbehaved with soldiers, although like other girls in locality she had danced with them.

Denied that she had killed her mother-in-law 'bien qu'elle l'eut en extreme haine a cause qu'elle estoit soubçonnée sorciere de ce son proces luy avoit esté faict.' Strongly resisted accusations, apart from one case of purse-cutting for which she had made restitution.

Was given rack, which she resisted - recorded as having been bleeding from hands and feet.

PG des Vosges asked that she should be flogged and banished. Change de Nancy ruled that she should be renvoyée, since she had 'suffisament purgée les indices, contre elle resultans par ladite procedure.'