

B 7137 no 1; witch 115, Jennon Villemin dite la Gargantine, de Villoncourt

23 June 1625; informations préparatoires (taken at village of Bazegney by prévôt of Mirecourt on orders of PG des Vosges; she is said to be accused of 'magie, sortilège, venefice, et superstitions a cures et soulagements de maladies par elle entreprisne par sorts suppots et pactions diaboliques sur une infinité de personnes').

(1) Demenge Serrurier, 45

Before last Purification of Our Lady had illness in 'petit ventre', and sent for her to heal him. Used unknown herbs and white wine which she boiled up to make drink he was to take warm each morning. Also lit 9 candles, and when they went out said he had 'maladie St Bernard', so he should have a pilgrimage made. She claimed to make this, although he did not know for sure she had done this, and he gave her 2 écus, but did not get any better. (Clumsy signature)

(2) Margueritte femme Georgeot Gerard Dol, 60

Had been ill for 7 years, with something moving about in body which sometimes rose to her throat and threatened to stifle her. After last Christmas she and husband consulted Jennon, who cut some candles and put them on table, saying she had illness of saints she named. These were St Oudou, St Humbert at Aultrey, and Vierge de Lamet (La Maix). Suggested pilgrimages, saying that to go to last-named meant passing through woods. At request of children of witness she undertook this last pilgrimage - was away 8 days when weather was very bad. Brought back 5 small stones, which she put in red wine she heated and made her drink for 9 days. Had felt worse when candles were lit; after return rather better, but not cured.

(3) Claudon femme Claudon Borain, 25

Had been ill for more than a year, with something moving around body, and around last Christmas sent for Jennon. Used 9 candles to identify it as 'mal de St Genois le grand'; needed a German to make pilgrimage, as it was far into Germany. Agreed to do it for 12 francs; before leaving had 'supellict' made, with some points sewn on it. Had witness wear it and say 9 paternosters and 9 ave marias, before taking it herself. Also had some money to buy a chicken and have mass said. Returned more than 2 weeks later, with some rye bread and white wine; used latter and herbs to make drink. She took these for 9 days. Jennon said that on her way she had been frightened by a black dog. Promised her that she would soon vomit out 'une lezarde', but got no better. Before handing over the garment she had said 'Jehennon je me descharge de mon pellerinage et vous en charge'.

(4) Didon femme Didier Goudot, 50

Had heard of treatment of Margueritte (witness 2), and called her in for own longstanding stomach complaint. Gave name of saint she could not remember, after using candles, and said pilgrimage to Chapelle de la Croix in Germany was needed. Had offered to send her husband on pilgrimage, but Jennon said it had to be a woman, and she would go. Used scarf for ceremony as with previous witness, brought back bread

and red wine, had taken chapelet of witness and some salt with her. Claimed to have seen Virgin as if she was alive, but no healing followed.

(5) Barbon femme Bastien Saulnier, 40

Last Christmas had heard she was at house of Claudon Borain; other women advised her to ask how to stop her husband's debauches. She recommended pilgrimage to La Croix aux Mines, which she made for 4 francs. Before leaving made drink for her to give her husband in morning before he had taken any wine - this was made with wine, herbs from her apron, pepper and ginger. Made another drink with wine and herbs after return, but had no effect on his behaviour. Had also told witness that if he did not amend before Easter 'il se desesperoit'.

(25 June 1625)

(6) Margueritte veuve Jean Husson, bourgeois de Mirecourt, 50

A month earlier heard Jennon was at house of Jean Passans, and went to consult her about illness of daughter Anne. Was told she had 'ung diable au corps, une coleuvre de la longueur de son bras, et ung crapeau'. Offered to cure her, but witness insisted on consulting curé first; he spoke to Jennon, then told her to retire discreetly, and forebade witness to let her touch her daughter.

(7) Catherine femme Jean Laurens, drappier bourgeois de Mirecourt, 50

A month earlier had consulted her about stomach trouble, and used candles to detect saints involved. Gave her 15 gros for pilgrimages to Nre Dame de Syon and Nre Dame aux Trois Espines, also some cloth to make dress for Virgin. Returned with 'couronne de pimprenelle' she was to put on stomach, but curé forebade her to do so.

(8) Francoise veuve Didier Cochien, marechal de Mirecourt, 46

3 weeks earlier heard she was at house of Nicolas Lolbion, pasticier, and went to consult her about bad leg. Told her it was 'mal de St Mimin', and needed pilgrimage there, but when witness said she would send her daughter said it needed a woman who could speak German and 'romand'. Agreed to go herself for 8 francs; made her an ointment with lard, eggs, blessed candles, and oil, which she was to put on her leg. Asked to be given 'ung bas de toile d'homme, et de la fiente de cheval qu'elle fit mettre dedans ledit bas par la fille d'elle deposante avec cinq oeufs', saying she had to take this with her. Told her she would return in a certain day when she should have dinner ready, made her another ointment with eggs, herbs, and oil. When she applied this leg became swollen; thought if she had not stopped using it she would have died.

(26 June 1625)

(9) Margueritte femme Jean Gardel, de Mirecourt, 30

Around last St George Jennon had promised to cure her longstanding stomach trouble. Made drink with wine and herbs, which she reduced by boiling; caught fire

during this, and asked her 's'il y avoit une personne qui luy vouloit mal, et que c'estoit le parent de son marit'. Drink had helped her up to present.

(10) Magdelene femme Demenge Aulbertin, drappier de Mirecourt, 50

Had been to see her at house of Pierrot le Saulx to consult her about trouble with tongue. Same process with drink as in previous testimony (it caught fire); said 'que le mal qu'elle avoit luy avoit esté donné et n'avoit on pheu luy donner en autre lieu, ladite deposante s'en ayante espouvanté elle luy dict que c'estoit peu de cas, qu'il convenoit faire ung pelerinage a Bel Bernard, et qu'il falloit y envoyer une femme veuve'. Agreed to go for 2 francs, saying she need 'surpellict' to give saint, and that witness should sew on 25 points in name of God, the Virgin, and the saint. Also verbal formula to transfer pilgrimage to her, and prayers to say in groups of 9. Neither drink nor pilgrimage did her any good.

(11) Marie femme George Ruzet, bourgeois de Mirecourt, 38

Had illness in chest and ribs, and was told by wife of Pierrot de Saulx that they had a good woman in their house who healed sick. Same process with wine which caught alight; said to her 'Vous n'avez pas le mal que vous pensez, vous avez ung cruel mal', and prescribed pilgrimage to Beau Bernard. Husband asked her to make this; she said she must take some salt and chapelet to be blessed, also money to buy some bread and wine. Brought these back, but she obtained no relief.

(12) Idotte femme Claudin Henryot, de Mirecourt, 33

Had consulted her over illness of small son; promised to heal him and make him walk as straight as her. Undertook pilgrimage to Beau Bernard for 5 francs, plus 30 gros for masses and alms. When she saw child said he had worms in his back, and she would get them out with ointments and baths made with herbs. He was not healed, however. When she came into house said 'Dieu y ait part, a la bonne heure puisse je entrer ceans'. Had also said that someone had made him ill, and if he died someone else would fall ill.

(13) Fleurette femme Pierrot Jean, marchal de Mirecourt, 80

Said that 30 years earlier (?) she had treated her lip with 'racines d'herbes', but this had done no good.

(14) Barbon femme Claude Noel, de Mirecourt, 44

Jennon had slept in her house for 3 weeks, and treated sick daughter with drink made from wine and herbs, but this had no effect.

(15) Marie femme Demenge Lorrain

Her brother Jean Husson, dyer, had told him Jennon was in his house, and might bring her some healing. Used candles, said she must make pilgrimage to Virgin far off; 6 francs, a surplice, and chapelet to be blessed. On return boiled herbs and wine, and when it took light said 'Ah Genot, Genot, Genot tu veulx estre bien malade Genot'. Witness was frightened and asked why she named witches; she replied 'que c'estoit celuy

qui luy avoit donné le mal qui se mettoit dedans le chauldron, et qu'il seroit bien malade'. On return from pilgrimage witness had been worse than usual, and she told her this was a sign of healing. Witness added 'qu'elle luy fit mesurer trois toisses de filet, puis mesura sa haulteur par trois fois disante a chacune Au nom de dieu et de la Vierge Marie, et disoit que celuy qui avoit donné le mal a la fille dudit Jean Husson luy avoit donné le sien.'

(16) Catherine servante a Demenge Lorrain, 20

When Jennon met her she asked how her mistress was, and she said just as usual - she replied that if she had been allowed to treat her she would have healed her, but she risked being ill for the rest of her life.

(17) Jeannon veuve Nicolas Mengenot, bourgeois de Mirecourt, 55

About a month earlier, when she had been at house of Pierrot le Saulx, asked her if she could heal her daughter who had jaundice. Took an egg, made little hole in it and put in 5 grains of wheat, then threw them on the fire to burn. Said she must make pilgrimage to Nre Dame, asking for 'une aulne de petit passavent' to give to the child of the Virgin, and 5 sols to give to 3 pilgrims. On return made drink for child, and another for witness who had 'ung rheume', but neither did any good. Heard her say that late husband had been bewitched, daughter was also, and first daughter had been.

(18) Claude femme Thieriot Vuillemin, marchand bourgeois de Mirecourt, 50

Had consulted her over longstanding stomach trouble, and she promised cure after pilgrimage to ND de Lamet. Gave her 18 gros for a mass and a candle; Jennon gave her herbs to drink in white wine; when on return she was no better, gave her 5 roots to boil in wine, saying that if it caught light someone had given her the illness. Did not actually do this; had given her 4 francs for pilgrimage, and a scarf as a surplice for Virgin's child, on which she sewed 9 points.

27 June 1625; PG des Vosges (Dumenil) asks for interrogation; she should be asked if she had known Anthoine Grevillon, or frequented area of Bussang and le Thillot.

1 July; interrogation (by George Gerard, lieutenant en la prévôté de Mirecourt)

Said she was about 30, daughter of Claudon Vuillemin of Velaucourt. Had gone into service with Mme de Bouzellon near Ramberviller 18 years earlier, and stayed there 6 years. Then promised marriage to Nicolas Breton of Liepvre, a doctor living at Ramberviller. Left on a Saturday, were betrothed on Sunday and married on Monday at Liepvre. Asked about haste, said it was from necessity; curé knew they were good people, and they paid him 5 francs for bans. Asked if she was pregnant, admitted this; gave birth 6 weeks later. Husband only lived another 5 and a half years; had three sons by him, who all died very young.

Asked if she had children by anyone else, admitted she had a son by an unknown man, who had promised to marry her in presence of curé, but never returned from pilgrimage to St Jacques. Child had been born more than 3 years earlier, and lived with her brother Nicolas, forester for duke at Tencey. Had left Liepvre 13 months earlier because of Mansfeld, went to Porthsieux where one named Jean Beurion had a child

with a bad leg. Was proposal to amputate, but she cured him by drawing a bone out of it. Used an ointment made with lard, 'huyle de cheneveux', blessed candle, 15 leaves 'de sauge croisée' and 'levain de froment'. Claimed Mme de Bouxellon had taught her this.

Had been at Vaxoncourt (by Moselle) at Christmas when Demenge de Ville of Bazegney came with a horse to fetch her so she could treat his daughter, who had stomach complaint. Had made her drink with white wine and herb called 'langue de cerf', which she took every morning, and she had recovered.

Had promised to cure the 'serrurier', and made him drink with 'saincq' and white wine. Also made pilgrimage to la Croix in Ban de Laveline, and to Beau Bernard. Was given 2 écus, but these were stolen from house by Jean Ré of Nomexey one night when she was sleeping with him. He had promised to marry her and slept with her for 2 nights - told Serrurier he was her brother.

Admitted using candles in case of Margueritte femme Georgeot Gerard; gave them names of saints and first one to go out indicated which pilgrimage to make. Agreed to pilgrimages as described by witness; said she had 14 aulnes of cloth, then said it was only 7 francs worth, from which she made 'chemises' for herself and Jean Ré. Had brought back 5 stones from well where Virgin was supposed to have rested after being chased by dogs, as she had heard.

Used candles again for daughter (not wife) of Jean Borain, and made pilgrimage to ND des Trois Epis (near Kayserberg), for 8 francs. Had carried out procedures with surplice, and bought chicken to offer on altar. Chapel was the finest in Lorraine or Allemaigne, 'et y a plus de plain une chambre d'enfans de cire ayans chacun trois ou cinq pieces d'argent au col'. Asked about black dog, said it had followed her for an hour after she passed cross where a man had been killed; she prayed and it finally took a different road. Asked about lizard, said she had told woman that if she had anything inside her she would vomit it out, but later heard she had not done so.

In case of Didon femme Didier Goudot, had taken scarf for little Jesus in chapel of la Croix, ban de Laveline. Reason she had said he should not make the pilgrimage was 'parce que les femmes faisoient mieulx les pelerinages que les hommes'. Asked if she had told him she had seen the Virgin, said she had been in a thousand places over last year, and could not remember all she had said. Was true that about a year earlier had seen the sky split when on road between Rambervillier and Romont.

Admitted making drink for Bastien Saulnier, using slightly different ingredients from those named by wife - latter had told her that if he continued drinking he would die.

In case of Francoise veuve Didier Cochien admitted taking horsedung to St Mimin, and putting it by feet of saint, then taking bottle of water for her to drink; said she did not know why this was done, but all those who went to shrine took similar things. Would have cured her within a month, with God's grace, if she had not been arrested. Might well have told Jean Passant's wife that one of his relatives wished her ill.

Had treated Marie femme George Ruzet, who she said had 'ung pointe . . . au coeur et qu'on luy avoit donné au retour de Bouzemont.' Agreed she had told her she had another illness than one she thought, and advised pilgrimage; had taken her chapelet, with salt, bread, and wine, to be blessed by curé of la Croix, and he told her to take them over 9 day period.

Said she had promised to cure Marie femme Demenge Lorrain, who had heavy periods; made drink with verveyne, but was chased from house after 4 days. Admitted calling 'Ah Genot' over cauldron, but not saying that fire was person who had given illness. Admitted measuring with thread before making 3 'echarpes' to take on pilgrimage. In conversation with servant had said her mistress would fare as she had paid her (never received promised 8 francs).

Asked about placing grains of wheat in egg, said greater part of women did this. In general admitted virtually all details of cures as reported by witnesses, with only small variants, and less emphasis on idea of witchcraft as cause of illnesses.

Denied having been in area of Bussang and le Thillot, said she had never been further than Epinal, Sainct Mont and Gerame (?), where she bought cheeses during lifetime of husband. Said she had never met Grevillon; knew he had been burned because Mre Nicolas told her.

Named 7 kinds of herbs she used - verfeuil, persin, racine de fenouil, saincq, langue de cerf, becont, and varveine. All except becont and saincq grew in gardens; identified samples of these last 2 from house of Pierot le Saulx. Asked if saincq did not have another name, and whether she knew that witches used it to cast spells, denied doing any such thing herself.

2 July 1625; PG asks for confrontations

2 July 1625; confrontations

Marie femme George Ruzet added that on return from pilgrimage Jennon told her she had nearly had to return early from pilgrimage because she had such difficulty; met many hares, a 'couleuvre' with wings and another without, and a great wolf. Had also lost cross off chapelet. Jennon accepted virtually everything that was said, declaring it was the truth.

9 July 1625; statement that she had escaped by prison, by making a hole in the wall; then had to negotiate drops of 8 feet and 12 feet.

17 July 1625; PG notes that she had been recaptured on 12 July; asks for question ordinaire to allow further investigation of her superstitions and possible witchcraft.

21 July 1625; Change de Nancy declares that she is sufficiently convicted 'd'avoir par action superstitieuse commis plusieurs affronteries et tromperies', and should be whipped and banished in perpetuity.

26 July 1625; formal sentence pronounced and carried out

Followed by statement about costs, which makes it clear that PG had been informed of her activities on 30 May, and took steps to have her arrested and interrogated on same day. Doctors, apothecaries, and surgeons were called in to judge whether herbs she carried were genuine or 'contresuperstition'.

After escape prévôt was told by those who had seen her on road that she had injured herself, so sent sergeant and 2 men to look for her. Unsuccessful for 2 days, because she hid in woods by day, and went begging food at night. On third day heard that pain from injuries had forced her to seek refuge in a village, where she was arrested by the sergeant and brought back on a cart next day. Surgeon advised that life would be in danger if she was returned to prison, so she was put under guard of a woman who lived near the prison for 8 days.

Costs amounted to 131 francs, paid on 26 February 1626.