

4535 No 2 Witch 087, Ysabel et Gauthine Seguin

14 August 1596; informations préparatoires contre Ysabel veuve de Nicolas Seguin, alias Colardote. Taken by Symon Sallet, juré des douze de la justice ordinaire de Neufchatel, on orders of maire Nicolas Lalleman, himself representing procureur fiscal des Vosges; this followed common report that she was a witch, and had caused some to become ill with 'maladies incognues et incurables, et dont c'est grand pitie à les veoir.'

(1) Guennotte fille de Jean Louys tixerant bourgeois de Nenfchatel, 22

[Marginal note that she was dead before confrontations - presumably those of two years later.]

Asked about her illness, said she reckoned it to have been caused by the accused. At Whitsun two years before she and Ysabel's daughter Gauthine had made a pilgrimage to Saint Marcoux, both being afflicted 'du mal d'iceluy saint'. A year later, on Saturday before 'la petite feste Dieu', she had been selling 'cabus' at market; Ysabel came up and asked 'comment se portent tes maulx'. On reply that they 'se portoient bien', said 'ceux de notre Gauthine sont tout ainsy', then touched witness on shoulder. On Monday went to market again, but began to feel unwell. Mother then called her home, because she wanted to go off to see her husband, who was in the garrison at Montigny-le-Roy. During fortnight's absence witness was very ill; had no appetite, came up in little lumps on side touched by Ysabel, then became all swollen. When mother returned she conjectured that Ysabel was responsible, and told Guennotte to go and see her, and try by 'belle parole' to get her to heal her. Went to house, and began by saying 'qu'elle avoit entendu, que le Roy venoit à Langres . . . et que si sa fille et elle alloient ensemble pour se faire toucher, qu'elles seroient du tout guerries, et seroient quictes de leurs abstinences. La dessus elle respondit qu'elle n'avoit moyen d'y envoyer sa fille toutesfois s'elle pouvoit elle l'y envoyroit.' Witness then showed her that she could hardly walk, and she told her it would be nothing, and wife of Jean des Voages had been as bad. Gave her strawberries and a small oatcake she had made; began to feel better, and was completely healed in 2-3 weeks.

Next St. Chrestofle's feast day, passing before church of that saint, saw Ysabel sitting before door with other 'pauvres'. Said good-day to witness, who replied that if she had known she was there she would have brought an 'aulmosne'; however, when Ysabel suggested sending Gauthine to fetch it, she said her mother was at home and it had better be for another day. That night her throat became so swollen she could not talk; went again to see Ysabel. Latter told her to put some chalk in a plate with water, mix them together, and drink mixture. Told her she needed a purse, a coiffe, and a couvresol for her daughter. These were given, and her mother gave her the drink; she then passed out worms and a 'sangsue'. Became better, until feast of Notre Dame in September, when her mother told her 'de faire ses Pasques, disant puisque ceste mauvaise femme a heu tant de puissance sur toy, qu'ayant receu notre seigneur elle n'en pourroit plus avoir'. Couldn't find a priest at St. Chrestofle, so mother told her to go to St. Nicolas; after confessing there she found Ysabel sitting on steps of entry; she pulled her clothes over her legs, saying 'Chout, on me romproit bien les deux jambes de froid', although it was not cold. Woke that night feeling that she was suffocating; throat and later whole body swollen, as they were still. Next day went to find Ysabel, and asked her to either cure her or kill her,

as she was 'saoule de languir'; reply was 'que si elle luy donnoit cent escus qu'elle ne la scauroit guerir.' On several subsequent occasions called out to her 'Genaiche ne me veux tu pas guerir', but she pretended not to hear; eventually reproached her and said she would complain of her. Witness immediately took her by hand, saying 'allons, allons nous plaindre nos deux je te feray brusler', but Ysabel went off 'murmurant parmy ledit marche'. A month later her father took her to visit Ysabel, and repeated threat to have her burned, but she continued to deny accusations. Before this had been taken to the 'juif medecin' of Remonville, but remedies had done no good, and this had made her father believe Ysabel responsible.

(2) Barthelemy fils de Jean Molen, portier et guet à la porte des Maisonnelles, 15

Previous Lent he, his mother and sister, had all been in good health when Ysabel had come to house to ask for her alms, also bringing some old pieces of sheet for his mother to mend. He had remarked 'Qu'est ce que vient faire ceste vieille genaulche ceans', having heard rumours in town. She replied 'Barthelemin t'en patirez', and when mother asked what he had said retorted that she knew well. On way out touched his hat, saying 'Bartelemin, Bathelmin, t'en patirez des grosses parolles que tu m'as dictes'. Within 8 days developed pain in right side, feeling as if he was bearing a heavy weight. Still troubled by this intermittently, despite purging and bleeding by doctors and surgeons. Father had been to see her, but she had said she could not heal him; he threatened to beat her and to have her burned, to which she replied that she wished she had already been.

(3) Alix femme à Estienne Baronel, 50

Told how during wine harvest two years before her daughter Jeanne had been working with Ysabel and others picking grapes; after a dispute Ysabel had thrown 'hottes' at her, striking her on shoulder., while saying 'Vien de par le diable'. That evening the girl became ill, vomiting continually, and told her mother she thought this was Colardote's doing. Mother went out and found Ysabel, who lived near, asking her to see daughter 'et commencea a la tanser, l'appellant truye et caigne qu'elle luy feroit tantost une belle saulce chez le receveur Hondreville'. Went off to find husband, who worked for receveur; meanwhile Ysabel went to see daughter, and said to her 'mauvaise garce tu mangerois bien si tu voullois, dis à ta mere en la touchant sur le col, qu'elle te face une bonne soupe et tu te porteras bien'. Did so and was cured.

(17 August 1596)

(4) Claude Magister laboureur, demeurant à Rouvre, 60

He and his family had taken refuge at Neufchatel during late wars, and had lived there 4 or 5 years. Daughter had married there; two years earlier had baby, and when it was 6 months old took it to visit house of father-in-law Jean Richard, a vigneron who lived in rue St. Marie. Ysabel also lived in house, and came in while grandmother was holding child 'pour luy faire feste';said to mother 'Ho Anne, le bel enfant que voicy'. No harm this time, but some 6 months later, in New Year, came to witness's house, where daughter also lived. Found her alone in house before dinner, holding baby before fire. Asked for alms, which she received, then started to make fuss of baby, touching its arm. Some 8 days later baby's right arm developed a boil,

which application of ointment over 3 months didn't help; finally went away, but succeeded by a 'bosse' under armpit which became running sore, and after another two months the child died. Also seemed to have something like an animal in stomach; after death they asked surgeon to open it, but he asked a florin, which seemed excessive, so they didn't proceed. His daughter had believed Ysabel responsible, given her reputation. He had asked her if she could suggest any cure, and she had told them to take baby to various churches etc., including onze mille vierges at Nancy, while saying it was only an 'enflure' and would heal in time. Also sent 'des ambres' to child through her daughter.

(5) Nicolas fils de Didier Giaguier de Neufchatel, 15.

Told story of going back to vines at wine harvest two years before to look for his 'devantier', which he had forgotten. Saw 5 figures 'qui sautelloient' one after another; when one turned its head face was blackened. When he got down to the place he saw Ysabel and her daughter there.

29 May 1598; confrontations (These followed accusations made by Denyse veuve Anthoine Pottier, see previous case, witch 086).

Denied all allegations by Alix femme Estienne Baronel 'avec blasphemes et execrations'. Agreed some of statement by Barthelemy, although not to saying 'qu'il en patiroit' - here again denied 'avec imprecations du diable', adding that he was 'ung jeune esvente et menteur', unworthy of credit. In respect of the late Guennotte, agreed to having given strawberries, and to receiving presents for her own daughter, but denied rest.

3 June 1598; interrogations

Gauthine, the daughter, interrogated first. Said she was about 17; her father Gerardmer had been dead before her birth. She and her mother had lived by working at harvest time, spinning and going to woods at other times. Asked 'sy elle scavoit que sadite mere pour se relever de nécessité se fust laissée aller à quelqu'ung qui luy promectoit ayde et secours' - no reply recorded. Agreed that her mother had been called witch by Geonnotte, but said that this had done her great wrong.

Ysabel then interrogated. Said she was about 62, native of St. Elophe (?), a nearby village. Before marriage had been 'chambrière' to a priest of the town; first marriage to Gerardmer had lasted six years, and had produced her daughter Gauthine. Had later remarried (couldn't remember time) with Colardot Seguin; after second widowhood had been obliged to 'mendier sa vie', but had never done anything unworthy of a 'femme de bien'. Admitted that some had called her a witch, and that her poverty had prevented her from seeking redress.

4 June 1598; PG des Vosges asks for question extraordinaire for mother, and that Gauthine be 'présentée à la question'.

6 June 1598; Change de Nancy agrees

15 June 1598; interrogations under torture (or threat)

Gauthine again interrogated first; denied all that was said against her, despite presentation to 'question'. Were of course no specific charges against her; she denied even points admitted by mother about receiving gifts etc.

Ysabel then interrogated. When tortured she agreed that she had been seduced by Mre Persil some 18 years before, when in fields lamenting loss of first husband, which had reduced her to extreme poverty. Had been to sabbat, when she had seen Denyse and la Grande Jeannon de Rebeufville. Also agreed that she had taken daughter some 4 years earlier. Admitted deaths of which she had been accused, together with one or two lesser malefices. Asked about hailmaking at sabbat, claimed she had always refused to do this.

16 June 1598; interrogation

Ysabel renewed all previous confessions. Said her daughter had gone unwillingly to sabbat, and had done no other harm. Witches danced back to back at sabbat so that they shouldn't know one another.

Mother and daughter then confronted; both maintained positions. Gauthine declared to mother 'qu'elle n'avoit plus d'esprit ny d'entendement ains l'avoir perdu'. Mother replied 'que non, et qu'elle l'avoit aussy bon que Jamais, mais qu'il falloit dire vérité'.

18 June 1598; procureur general des Vosges orders execution of mother, and torture of daughter.

20 June 1598; Change de Nancy approves

27 June 1598; interrogation under torture

Gauthine now tortured four times, but refused to admit anything, saying she was innocent, that God knew it, and invoking aid of Virgin Mary.

29 June 1598; PG des Vosges orders that she be renvoyée jusqu'à rappel.

29 June 1598; Change de Nancy agrees

30 June 1598; order for release of Gauthine

6 July 1598; order for execution of Ysabel.