



This compilation © Phoenix E-Books UK

CONFESSIONS
OF
Witches
Under Torture.

MDCXVII.



Edinburgh:
E. & G. GOLDSMID.

1886.

INTRODUCTION.



THE belief in Magic and Witchcraft was almost universal in the Middle Ages, and "affected every class of Society, and all sorts and conditions of men." In our own country, as evidenced by our judicial records, the unreasoning credulity which swept across the civilised world, rose to high-water mark, assisted as it was by the efforts of that wise fool of a King, James the First of England and Sixth of Scotland.

This is a translation from the Official records of the Royal Court of Guernsey, of the trial of three women for witchcraft in 1617. It is taken from Mr. J. L. Pitt's *Witchcraft and Devil-Lore in the Channel Islands*. Any one interested in the subject should get a copy of this very curious, interesting and really well edited pamphlet.

E. G.





Confessions of Witches under Torture.



Before AMICE DE CARTERET, Esq., Bailiff,
and the Jurats.

JULY 4th, 1617.

SENTENCE OF DEATH.

Collette du Mont, widow of *Jean Becquet*; *Marie*, her daughter, wife of *Pierre Massy*; and *Isabel Becquet*, wife of *Jean Le Moygne*, being by common rumour and report for a long time past addicted to the damnable art of Witchcraft, and the same being thereupon seized and apprehended by the Officers of His Majesty [James I.], after voluntarily submitting themselves, both upon the general inquest of the country, and after having been several times brought up before the Court, heard, examined, and confronted,

upon a great number of depositions made and produced before the Court by the said Officers; from which it is clear and evident that for many years past the aforesaid women have practised the diabolical art of Witchcraft, by having not only cast their spells upon inanimate objects, but also by having retained in langour through strange diseases, many persons and beasts; and also cruelly hurt a great number of men, women, and children, and caused the death of many animals, as recorded in the informations thereupon laid, it follows that they are clearly convicted and proved to be Witches. In expiation of which crime it has been ordered by the Court that the said women shall be presently conducted, with halters about their necks, to the usual place of punishment, and shall there be fastened by the Executioner to a gallows, and be hanged, strangled, killed, and burnt, until their flesh and bones are reduced to ashes, and the ashes shall be scattered; and all their goods, chattels, and estates, if any such exist, shall be forfeited to His Majesty. In order to make them disclose their accomplices, they shall be put to the question before the Court, previous to being executed.

*Not a witch
I have
money*

Sentence of Death having been pronounced against *Collette Du Mont*, widow of *Jean Becquet*; *Marie*, her daughter, wife of *Pierre Massy*; and *Isabel Becquet*, wife of *Jean Le Moygne*; the same have confessed as follows:—

CONFESSION OF COLLETTE DU MONT.

First, the said *Collette* immediately after the said sentence was pronounced, and before leaving the Court, freely admitted that she was a Witch; at the same time, not wishing to specify the crimes which she had committed, she was taken, along with the others, to the Torture Chamber, and the said question being applied to her, she confessed that she was quite young when the Devil, in the form of a cat:* appeared to her: in the Parish of Torteval: as she was returning from her cattle, it being still daylight, and that he took occasion to lead her astray by inciting her to avenge herself on one of her neighbours, with whom she was then at enmity, on account of some damage which

* As regards these colons, occurring where they are not required, Mr Pitts observes that they correspond to similar pauses in the original records, and evidently indicate the successive stages by which the story was wrung from the wretched victims. They are thus endowed with a sad and ghastly significance, for it must be remembered that the confessions were not made in a connected form, but were elicited by leading questions, often accompanied by a fresh spell of torture.

she had suffered through the cattle of the latter ; that since then when she had a quarrel with anyone, he appeared to her in the aforesaid form : and sometimes in the form of a dog : inducing her to take vengeance upon those who had angered her : persuading her to cause the death of persons and cattle.

That the Devil having come to fetch her that she might go to the Sabbath, called for her without anyone perceiving it : and gave her a certain black ointment with which (after having stripped herself), she rubbed her back, belly and stomach : and then having again put on her clothes, she went out of her door, when she was immediately carried through the air at a great speed : and she found herself in an instant at the place of the Sabbath, which was sometimes near the parochial burial-ground : and at other times near the seashore in the neighbourhood of Rocquaine Castle : where, upon arrival, she met often fifteen or sixteen Wizards and Witches with the Devils who were there in the form of dogs, cats, and hares : which Wizards and Witches she was unable to recognise, because they were all blackened and disfigured : it was true, however, that she had heard the Devil summon them by their names, and she remembered among others those of *Fallaise* and *Hardie* ; confessed that on entering the Sabbath : the Devil wishing to summon them commenced with her sometimes. Admitted that her daughter *Marie*, wife of *Massy*, now condemned for a similar crime, was a

Witch : and that she took her twice to the Sabbath with her : at the Sabbath, after having worshipped the Devil, who used to stand up on his hind legs, they had connection with him under the form of a dog ; then they danced back to back. And after having danced, they drank wine (she did not know what colour it was), which the Devil poured out of a jug into a silver or pewter goblet ; which wine did not seem to her so good as that which was usually drunk ; they also ate white bread which he presented to them—she had never seen any salt at the Sabbath.

Confessed that the Devil had charged her to call, as she passed, for *Isabel le Moygne* : when she came to the Sabbath, which she had done several times. On leaving the Sabbath the Devil incited her to commit various evil deeds : and to that effect he gave her certain black powders, which he ordered her to throw upon such persons and cattle as she wished ; with this powder she perpetrated several wicked acts which she did not remember : among others she threw some upon *Mr Dolbell*, parish minister : and was the occasion of his death by these means. With this same powder she bewitched the wife of *Jean Maugues* : but denied that the woman's death was caused by it : she also touched on the side, and threw some of this powder over the deceased wife of *Mr Perchard*, the minister who succeeded the said *Dolbell* in the parish, she being *enceinte* at the time, and so caused the death of her and her infant—she did not know that the

deceased woman had given her any cause for doing so.

Upon the refusal of the wife of *Collas Tottévin* to give her some milk : she caused her cow to dry up, by throwing upon it some of this powder : which cow she afterwards cured again by making it eat some bran, and some terrestrial herb that the Devil gave her.

CONFESSION OF MARIE BECQUET.

Marie, wife of *Pierre Massy*, after sentence of death had been pronounced against her, having been put to the question, confessed that she was a Witch; and that at the persuasion of the Devil, who appeared to her in the form of a dog : she gave herself to him : that when she gave herself to him he took her by the hand with his paw : that she used to anoint herself with the same ointment as her mother used : and had been to the Sabbath upon the bank near *Rocquaine* Castle with her, where there was no one but the Devil and her as it seemed : in the aforesaid form in which she had seen him several times : She was also at the Sabbath on one occasion among others in the road near *Collas Tottévin's*; every time that she went to the Sabbath, the Devil came to her, and it seemed as though he transformed her into a female dog ; she said that upon the shore, near the said *Rocquaine* : the Devil, in the form of a dog, having had connection with her, gave her bread and wine, which she ate and drank.

The Devil gave her certain powders: which powders he put into her hand, for her to throw upon those whom he ordered her: she threw some of them by his orders upon persons and cattle: notably upon the child of *Pierre Brehaut*. Item, upon the wife of *Jean Bourgaize*, while she was *enceinte*. Item, upon the child of *Leonard le Messurier*.

CONFESSION OF ISABEL BECQUET.

Isabel, wife of *Jean le Moygne*, having been put to the question, at once confessed that she was a Witch: and that upon her getting into a quarrel with the woman *Girarde*, who was her sister-in-law: the Devil, in the form of a hare, took occasion to tempt her: appearing to her in broad daylight in a road near her house: and persuading and inciting her to give herself to him: and that he would help her to avenge herself on the said *Girarde*, and everybody else: to which persuasion she would not at the moment condescend to yield: so he at once disappeared: but very soon he came again to her in the same road, and pursuing his previous argument: exhorted her in the same terms as above: that done, he left her and went away, after having previously given her a sackful of parsnips; she then took a certain black powder wrapped in a cloth in which he placed it; which

powder she kept by her. He appeared to her another time under the same form in the town district, inciting her anew to give herself to him, but she not wishing to comply, he next made a request to her to give him some living animal: whereupon she returned to her dwelling and fetched a chicken which she carried to him to the same place where she had left him, and he took it: and after having thanked her he made an appointment for her to be present the next morning before daylight at the Sabbath, promising that he would send for her: according to which promise, during the ensuing night, the old woman *Collette du Mont*, came to fetch her, and gave her some black ointment, which she had had from the Devil; with this (after having stripped herself) she annointed her back and belly, then having dressed herself again she went out of her house door: when she was instantly caught up: and carried across hedges and bushes to the bank on the sea shore, in the neighbourhood of Rocquaine Castle, the usual place where the Devil kept his Sabbath; no sooner had she arrived there than the Devil came to her in the form of a dog, with two great horns sticking up: and with one of his paws (which seemed to her like hands) took her by the hand: and calling her by her name told her that she was welcome: then immediately the Devil made her kneel down: while he himself stood up on his hind legs; he then made her express detestation of the Eternal in these words: *I renounce God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost;*

and then caused her to worship and invoke himself in these terms : *Our Great Master, help us !* with a special compact to be faithful to him ; and when this was done he had connection with her in the aforesaid form of a dog, but a little larger : then she and the others danced with him back to back : after having danced, the Devil poured out of a jug some black wine, which he presented to them in a wooden bowl, from which she drank, but it did not seem to her so good as the wine which is usually drunk : there was also bread—but she did not eat any : confessed that she gave herself to him for a month : they returned from the Sabbath in the same manner that they went there.

The second time she was at the Sabbath was after the old woman *Collette* had been to fetch her, and she anointed herself with the ointment as above stated ;—declared, that on entering the Sabbath, she again had connection with the Devil and danced with him ; after having danced, and upon his solicitation to prolong the time, she gave herself to him, for three years ; at the Sabbath the Devil used to summon the Wizards and Witches in regular order (she remembered very well having heard him call the old woman *Collette* the first, in these terms : *Madame the Old Woman Becquette*) : then the woman *Fallaise* ; and afterwards the woman *Hardie*. Item, he also called *Marie*, wife of *Massy*, and daughter of the said *Collette*. Said that after them she herself was called by the Devil : in these terms : *The Little Becquette* : she also heard him call there

Collas Becquet, son of the said old woman (who [*Collas*] held her by the hand in dancing, and someone [a woman] whom she did not know, held her by the other hand): there were about six others there she did not know: the said old woman was always nearest to the Devil: occasionally while some were dancing, others were having connection with the Devils in the form of dogs; they remained at the Sabbath about three or four hours, not more.

While at the Sabbath the Devil marked her at the upper part of the thigh: which mark having been examined by the midwives, they reported that they had stuck a small pin deeply into it, and that she had not felt it, and that no blood had issued: she did not know in what part the Devil had marked the others: those who came first to the place of the Sabbath, waited for the others; and all the Wizards and Witches appeared in their proper forms: but blackened and disfigured so that they could not be recognised.

The Devil appeared sometimes in the form of a goat at the Sabbath; never saw him in other forms: on their departure he made them kiss him behind, and asked them when they would come again: he exhorted them always to be true to him: and to do evil deeds, and to this end he gave them certain black powders, wrapped in a cloth, for them to throw upon those whom they wished to bewitch: on leaving the Sabbath, the Devil went away in one direction and they in the other: after he had taken them all by the

hand : At the instigation of the Devil she threw some of the powder over several persons and cattle : notably over *Jean Jehan*, when he came to her house to look for a pig. Item, over the child of *James Gallienne*, and over others. Item, over the cattle of *Brouart*, and of others.

It was the Devil that was seen at the said *Gallienne's* house in the form of a rat and a weazle, she herself being then in the neighbourhood of *Gallienne's* house, and he [the Devil] came to her in the form of a man, and struck her several blows on the face and head : by which she was bruised and torn in the way that she was seen the next day by *Thomas Schier*. And she believed that the cause of this maltreatment was because she would not go with the Devil to the house of the said *Gallienne*.

She never went to the Sabbath except when her husband remained all night fishing at sea.

Whenever she wanted to bewitch anyone and her powder happened to have been all used up, the Devil appeared to her and told her to go to such a place, which he named, for some more, and when she did so, she never failed to find it there.

F I N I S.



Printed by E. & G. Goldsmid, Edinburgh.

Widener Library



3 2044 079 414 165

