

THE COMBAT OF THE THIRTY

Music and original Lyrics: *La Bataille des Trente (Stourm Ann Tregont) in the Barzaz Breiz.*

Same tune as *Jeanne-la-Flamme (Janedig Flamm)*. Collected by *Théodore Hersart de la Villemarqué, Barzaz Breiz.* before 1846, https://fr.wikisource.org/wiki/Barzaz_Breiz/1846

Lyrics: Translation and arrangement by *Dorothea de Beckham (Dee Becker)* (© 2020)



I

The month of March, with its hammers,
comes to strike at our doors.
The woods are bent by the rain;
roofs creak under torrents of hail.

But these are not the only March
hammers that strike our doors.
Hail is not the only thing
that cracks so loud upon the roofs.

It's not just hail; it's not the falling
rain in torrents that strike.
Worse than the winds and the rain,
are the dreadful English!

II

"Lord Saint Kado, our patron,
give us strength and courage,
so that today we defeat
the enemies of Brittany.

If we return from combat, we
will present you with a belt
and a coat of gold,
sword, and blue cloak like the sky.

Everyone seeing you, will say,
Blessed Kado, oh holy lord:
'In heaven, as on earth,
Saint Kado has no equal!' "

III

"Tell me, tell me, how many
are there, my young squire?"
"How many there are?
I'll tell you: one, two, three,

Four five six; How many they are;
I'll tell you: how many there are,
Lord: five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten,
eleven, twelve, thirteen,

Fourteen and fifteen. Fifteen! and
others with them: one, two, three,
Four, five, six, seven, eight,
nine, ten, eleven, twelve, thirteen,

Fourteen and fifteen." "If they are thirty
like us, Forward! Friends, Courage!
Right to the horses with the hawks!
They will not eat our budding rye."

The blows fell fast as hammers on
anvils; blood flowed like swollen creeks.
Dilapidated armor as
the rags of the Beggar.

So wild were the knights' cries
in the grand melee,
like the voice of the
roaring great salt sea.

IV

The badger (Bembrough) then went up
To Tinteniach:

"Here's a blow from my good lance,
tell me if it's an empty reed."

"What will be empty in a moment
is your skull, my nice friend;
more than one raven
will scratch and peck at your brain."

He hadn't finished talking, when
His mallet struck with such force
That he crushed, like a snail,
helmet and head all at once.

Keranrais, seeing this, laughed
with a cringing heart:
"If they all stayed, like this one,
they would conquer the country!"

"How many are there dead, good squire?"
"Dust and blood stop me from seeing."
"How many are there dead, young squire?"
"There are five, six, seven, dead."

V

From daybreak, they fought until
midday; from noon until night,
They fought the English knights. When Lord
Robert (of Beaumanoir) shouted: ^[1]

"I am thirsty! Oh, so thirsty!"
Du Bois threw these words at him:
"If you are thirsty, friend, drink.
Go drink your blood!"

And Robert, when he heard it,
turned away his face in shame,
And he fell on the English,
and he killed another five.

"Tell me, tell me, my young squire,
how much is left?"
"Lord, I'll tell you: one, two, three,
four, five and six."

"These will be saved, but they will pay
a hundred sous of gold,
A hundred sous of brilliant gold
each, for the charges of this country.

VI

He would not have been the friend
of the Bretons, the one
Who would not have applauded
in the town of Josselin,

Seeing ours come back, with
broom flowers on their helms;
He would not have been the friend of
the Bretons, nor saints of Brittany

Neither, he who would not
have blessed Saint Kado,
Patron of warriors
of the country;

Whoever wouldn't have admired,
who would not have applauded,
who would not have blessed,
and who would not have sung:

"In heaven as on earth,
Saint Kado is second to none!"

[1] *Beaumanoir's given name was not Robert, and the numbers recorded in the collected song are not the historic numbers for the day of the Combat of the 30 (March 26, 1351)*