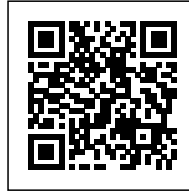




# IN BERLIN

*Posted on January 1, 2024 by Mary Boyle O'Reilly*



The train crawling out of Berlin was filled with women and children, hardly an able-bodied man. In one compartment a gray-haired Landsturm soldier sat beside an elderly woman who seemed weak and ill. Above the click-clack of the car wheels passengers could hear her counting: "One, two, three," evidently absorbed in her own thoughts. Sometimes she repeated the words at short intervals. Two girls tittered, thoughtlessly exchanging vapid remarks about such extraordinary behavior. An elderly man scowled reproval. Silence fell.

"One, two, three," repeated the obviously unconscious woman. Again the girls giggled stupidly. The gray Landsturm leaned forward.

"Fräulein," he said gravely, "you will perhaps cease laughing when I tell you that this poor lady is my wife. We have just lost our three sons in battle. Before leaving for the front myself I must take their mother to an insane asylum."

It became terribly quiet in the carriage.

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Mary Boyle O'Reilly (1873–1939) was a well-known American war and foreign correspondent during the First World War and afterwards.

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**Featured:** *Woman with Dead Child*, by Käthe Kollwitz; drawing (1903).

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