

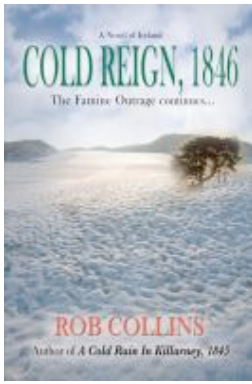
A Novel of Ireland

COLD REIGN, 1846

The Famine Outrage continues...

ROB COLLINS

Author of *A Cold Rain In Killarney, 1845*



The saga of the O'Connell family grows with new arrivals. The second year of the potato famine is followed by the most severe winter in Ireland's history. The cruelty of English landlords is graphically depicted. A New York newsman gathers information about English attempts to suppress news to the world of starvation and death in the peasant population. The deranged traveler "uncle" continues to sow his seeds of hate.

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Rob Collins

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First Edition

THE TRI-COLOUR AND MOLLY MALONE

The smoke filled interior of the room Neil and D'Arcy entered had three groups of men each around tables examining each-others creation. There was a woman in one of the groups, the dressmaker known only by her code name of Molly Malone. Well known to most of the group, D'Arcy introduced Neil to all. Neil opened the satchel and retrieved his furled flag. He shook it open, laying it on a vacant table as several interested designers watched. All, of course, had arguments for their design, including Neil, who had to say little as the meaning of his design was evident to all. His Tri-colour with the blood red center, bordered by green and orange spoke volumes.

"The red center I would hazard a guess would be in part to the memory of Robert Emmet? Am I correct?" one participant asked.

"A jar for the man, so correct was he," D'Arcy McGee applauded.

"D'Arcy is right, Neil supported. "A free and independent Ireland has been sought for hundreds of years," Neil said. "Many battles have been fought. Many have died in the belief that theirs was the just cause. My red center signifies the battles, and the religious battles, and the loss of life that resulted."

"Sure it would be a fitting symbol to fly from the highest staff over a free and independent Ireland," another said. Silent until now, the dressmaker got up from her chair.

"You have all had a chance to consider each creation, except for my own." She unfurled her design for everyone to see. Hers was, as well, a Tri-colour. A white center was bordered by green and orange.

"I have the meaning!" an excited entrant shouted.

"Sure it is I do as well," another said.

"Tell us, Molly Malone, do they know?" D'Arcy asked. The dressmaker nervously cleared her throat.

"For centuries wars have been fought over religious freedom. The borders signify the combatants, the Catholics and Protestants. The white center represents the hope we all have that our God will find a way to join all Irishmen together as one. The French support your

quest for independence, as well. We in France have a new republic, but problems continue, and France suffers in the fields as do your own." Silence reigned as everyone considered her words.

Then a voice was heard, "Aye, Molly Malone, you have me' vote."

"And mine," came another response, and from Neil Howe who stated:

"Sure the symbol should talk of our God and of peace rather than a remembrance of war and bloodshed. Molly, you have my vote." One after another confirmed the selection of the design created by the nationalist dressmaker, the bi-lingual French woman known only to a few by the code name Molly Malone.

"Merci," she said to all. "This shall be a gift to my dear friend Tom Meagher who all of you know. I trust the man explicitly to fly this design at the moment independence is found for Ireland in 1846, or twenty years from now, for shortly, I will return again to Paris. He is there. He and Smith O' Brien meet there with your Irish republican countrymen, exiled in Paris. Your symbol will come back with him. It will hide until he determines Ireland is free, and it is safe to fly."

Molly Malone was patient. She listened to the rumors, read reports of meetings in Southeast Ireland where her flag flew to celebrate the new French republic in 1848. She had no idea of how long she would wait to hear, no idea of the decades ahead, and the years passed by, and she grew old, and then she died. Her flag remained hidden, transferred from one patriot to another, from place to place, secretly, and its mystic grew as the months and the years on the calendars continued to turn, one after another, and another, and they said,

"'tis the gift of the French, and the French woman, Molly Malone," and they knew, and still, it remained ready, waiting to fly, and the grandfathers told tales of where it was, its journeys, and when it would be flown, if only, if only they would...! And then, the tears came and the grandfather's wrinkled fists clenched, trembling, and the child looked into his wet eyes, his own eyes wide, questioning.

"What, papa? Why do you cry?"

BULLY COWED

“Aye, a beautiful animal she surely is, and old not longer than three years this June,” said the man holding the halter of the brown and white Guernsey. Flynn nodded at his remarks while he made his own inspection, although he knew little of the assets or liabilities of any animal he examined. “A gentle animal she is. My children named her Bessie. Her milk is wasted as I have three others and we have other needs her sale will allow us to address,” he continued. “I brought her here from the islands as a calf and the decision to sell was not at all enjoyed by the children. They cried when I led her away.”

Interested spectators, buyers and sellers, stopped to listen to the man’s sales pitch briefly, before moving on. Some of them commented on what a splendid animal she was. The area was crowded and noisy, full of animal noises, others were hawking their own handmade items, trinkets, wood carvings, pots and pans and tin pails probably fashioned by a tinker were all for sale this day, even before the main event began.

“Sure it is you would not take that animal home with you,” a large man with a powerful, but sarcastic voice commented. “Look at its white spots, a disease it has, Irishman,” his order clearly directed at Flynn. He stood there with a grin on his face and twirled his stick in his hands. The two others that were with him stood behind in laughing support of the vocal fellow.

“I’ll have you know the cow is a Guernsey, and they all are the shade of brown you see and some have patches of white like Bessie,” the cow’s owner said.

“Does your brown cow deliver brown milk?” the man with the loud voice asked while he twirled his stick in his hands. The two men behind him pounded each other on the back, laughing at the loudmouth’s absurd question. Spectators moved away, sensing a confrontation, not joining in on the laughter of the two who supported the comedian who tried his best to obstruct the negotiations..

One of the spectators who departed said to the fellow next to him in a voice heard in the momentary silence, "'tis Roland Kelleher who twirls the stick." Roland overheard the remark that identified him to the spectators. In a show of bravado, he tossed his stick into the air and caught it with one hand on the way down.

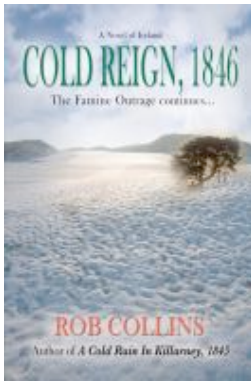
"I am Roland Kelleher, and I just advised the long haired Irishman not to purchase the animal with the disease." All the while Flynn and the owner of the Guernsey were conferring together, not paying much attention to Kelleher and his associates. They had agreed on the sale, and the amount to be paid as Flynn opened a drawstring bag. The cow's owner was writing a receipt on a sheet of paper as Kelleher walked to him and grabbed him by the collar, yanking him to his feet.

"Sure it is you would not sell a diseased animal to the Irishman, now would you?" he sarcastically asked. The cow's owner cringed.

"Unhand the man sir and go about your business and leave our business to us if you will," Flynn said. Kelleher had lifted the man, so his toes scraped the ground, but suddenly released him to tumble to the ground.

"You are a stubborn Irishman who will not listen, and you should be taught to listen." He swung his stick at Flynn who anticipated Kelleher's aggression and ducked. The stick cut the air with a "whoosh" as Flynn delivered his two handed reaction. The knobby end of his "bata" ended up buried deep into the midsection of Roland Kelleher who bent over and then collapsed to the ground. His two followers took one step toward Flynn who brandished his stick with the confidence recognized by two who decided not to suffer the same embarrassment. They both stepped back.

"Leave us," Flynn said, "and take the groaning one with you." Flynn went to a knee to check on the owner's condition. He was unhurt, just a bit terrified at coming into the hands of the notorious Kelleher clan and escaping with only mud and grass on his pants and hands.



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