

# The Rebels of Ireland: The Dublin Saga

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The Princes of Ireland, the first volume of Edward Rutherford's magisterial epic of Irish history, ended with the disastrous Irish revolt of 1534 and the disappearance of the sacred Staff of Saint Patrick. The Rebels of Ireland opens with an Ireland transformed; plantation, the final step in the centuries-long English conquest of Ireland, is the order of the day, and the subjugation of the native Irish Catholic population has begun in earnest.

Edward Rutherford brings history to life through the tales of families whose fates rise and fall in each generation: Brothers who must choose between fidelity to their ancient faith or the security of their families; a wife whose passion for a charismatic Irish chieftain threatens her comfortable marriage to a prosperous merchant; a young scholar whose secret rebel sympathies are put to the test; men who risk their lives and their children's fortunes in the tragic pursuit of freedom, and those determined to root them out forever. Rutherford spins the saga of Ireland's 400-year path to independence in all its drama, tragedy, and glory through the stories of people from all strata of society--Protestant and Catholic, rich and poor, conniving and heroic.

His richly detailed narrative brings to life watershed moments and events, from the time of plantation settlements to the "Flight of the Earls," when the native aristocracy fled the island, to Cromwell's suppression of the population and the imposition of the harsh anti-Catholic penal laws. He describes the hardships of ordinary people and the romantic, doomed attempt to overthrow the Protestant oppressors, which ended in defeat at the Battle of the Boyne in 1690, and the departure of the "Wild Geese." In vivid tones Rutherford re-creates Grattan's Parliament, Wolfe Tone's attempted French invasion of 1798, the tragic rising of Robert Emmet, the Catholic campaign of Daniel O'Connell, the catastrophic famine, the mass migration to America, and the glorious Irish Renaissance of Yeats and Joyce. And through the eyes of his characters, he captures the rise of Charles Stewart Parnell and the great Irish nationalists and the birth of an Ireland free of all ties to England.

A tale of fierce battles, hot-blooded romances, and family and political intrigues, The Rebels of Ireland brings the story begun in The Princes of Ireland to a stunning conclusion.

EDWARD RUTHERFURD was born in Salisbury, England, and educated at Cambridge University and Stanford University in California. His bestselling novel Sarum is based on the history of Salisbury and Stonehenge. Russka, his second novel, recounts the sweeping history of Russia. London tells the two-thousand-year story of the great city, bringing all of the richness of London's past unforgettably to life. His novel The Forest is set in England's ancient New Forest. His last novel, The Princes of Ireland is the companion to The Rebels of Ireland covering the first eleven centuries of Ireland's history. Edward Rutherford divides his time between Dublin and New York.

PLANTATION  
1597

Octor Simeon Pincher knew all about Ireland. Doctor Simeon Pincher was a tall, thin, balding man, still in his twenties, with a sallow complexion and stern black eyes that

belonged in a pulpit. He was a learned man, a graduate and fellow of Emmanuel College, at Cambridge University. When he had been offered a position at the new foundation of Trinity College in Dublin, however, he had come thither with such alacrity that his new hosts were quite surprised.

"I shall come at once," he had written to them, "to do God's work." With which reply, no one could argue.

Not only did he come with the stated zeal of a missionary. Even before his arrival in Ireland, Doctor Pincher had informed himself thoroughly about its inhabitants. He knew, for instance, that the mere Irish, as the original native Irish were now termed in England, were worse than animals, and that, as Catholics, they could not be trusted. But the special gift that Doctor Pincher brought to Ireland was his belief that the mere Irish were not only an inferior people, but that God had deliberately marked them out-along with others, too, of course-since the beginning of time, to be cast into eternal hellfire. For Doctor Simeon Pincher was a follower of Calvin.

To understand Doctor Pincher's version of the subtle teachings of the great Protestant reformer, it was only necessary to listen to one of his sermons-for he was already accounted a fine preacher, greatly praised for his clarity.

"The logic of the Lord," he would declare, "like His love, is perfect. And since we are endowed with the faculty of reason, with which God in His infinite goodness has bestowed upon us, we may see His purpose as it is." Leaning forward slightly towards his audience to ensure their concentration, Doctor Pincher would then explain.

"Consider. It is undeniable that God, the fount of all knowledge-to whom all ages are but as the blinking of an eye-must in His infinite wisdom know all things, past, present, and to come. And therefore it must be that even now, He knows full well who upon the Day of Judgement is to be saved, and who shall be cast down into the pit of Hell. He has established all things from the beginning. It cannot be otherwise. Even though, in His mercy, He has left us ignorant of our fate, some have already been chosen for Heaven and others for Hell. The divine logic is absolute, and all who believe must tremble before it. Those who are chosen, those who shall be saved, we call the Elect. All other, damned from the first, shall perish. And so," he would fix his audience with a terrible stare, "well may you ask: "Which am I?"

The grim logic of John Calvin's doctrine of predestination was hard to refute. That Calvin was a deeply religious and well-meaning man could not be doubted. His followers strove to follow the loving teachings of the gospels, and to live lives that were honest, hard-working, and charitable. But for some critics, his form of religion ran a risk: its practice could become unduly harsh. Moving from France to Switzerland, Calvin had set up his church in Geneva. The rules governing his community were sterner than those of the Lutheran Protestants, and he believed that the state should enforce them by law. Following their strict moral regime-and reporting their neighbors to the authorities for any failure to live according to God's law-his congregation did not only seek to earn a place in Heaven, but also to prove

to themselves and to the world that they were indeed the predestined Elect who had already been chosen to go there.

Soon Calvinist communities had sprung up in other parts of Europe. If the Scottish Presbyterians were known for their somewhat dour adherence to the doctrines of predestination, the Church of England and its sister Church of Ireland had nowadays a Calvinistic air. "Only the Godly are part of the Church," its congregations would declare.

But could it be that certain among the community might in fact not be chosen to go to Heaven at all? Most certainly, the Calvinists would concede. Any moral backsliding might be an indication of it. And even then, as Doctor Pincher put it in one of his finest sermons, there remained a great uncertainty.

"No man knows his fate. We are like men walking across a frozen river, foolishly unmindful that, at any time, the ice may crack, and buckle, and drop us down into the frozen waters—below which, hidden deeper yet, burn the fiery furnaces of Hell. Be not puffed up with pride, therefore, as you follow the law of the scriptures, but remember that we are all miserable sinners and be humble. For this is the divine trap, and from it there is no escape. All is foretold, and the mind of God, being perfect, will not be changed." Then, looking round at his disconsolate congregation, Doctor Pincher would cry out: "And even though, if God has so ordained, you may be doomed, yet I beseech you, be of good cheer. For remember, no matter how hard the way, we are commanded, always, to hope."

Might there, perhaps, be hope for some of those not in the Calvinist congregation? Perhaps. No man could know the mind of God. But it seemed doubtful. In particular, for those in the Catholic Church, the future looked bleak. Did they not indulge in popish superstitions and worship the saints as idols—things specifically prohibited in the scriptures? Hadn't they had opportunity to turn away from their errors? To Doctor Pincher it seemed that all followers of the Pope in Rome must surely be on their way to perdition, and that the natives of Ireland, whose bad character was so well-known, were probably in the devil's clutch already. And might they not yet be saved if they converted? Could not their case be remedied? No. Their sin, to Doctor Pincher, was a clear sign that they had been selected to be damned from the first. They belonged, like the pagan spirits that infested the place, deep underground. Such were the thoughts that had strengthened the keen resolve of Doctor Pincher as he crossed the sea to Dublin.

Yet what of his own fate? Was Simeon Pincher sure, in the secret places of his heart, that he himself was one of the Elect? He had to hope so. If there had been certain sins, indiscretions at least, in his own life, might they be signs that his own nature was corrupt? He turned his face from the thought. To sin, of course, was the lot of every man. Those who repented might indeed be saved. If sins there had been in his life, therefore, he repented most earnestly. And his daily conduct, and his zeal for the Lord, proved, he hoped and believed, that he was, indeed, not the least amongst God's chosen. It was a quiet day, with a light breeze, when he arrived at Dublin. His ship had anchored out in the Liffey. A waterman rowed him to the Wood Quay.

And he had just clambered onto the terra firma of Ireland represented by the old quay when, quite suddenly, something happened and the world turned upside down.

The next thing he remembered, he was lying facedown, conscious of a great roar, and that something had given him a huge blow in the stomach so that he could hardly breathe. He looked up, blinked, and saw the face of a man, a gentleman by his clothes, dusting himself off and gazing down at him with concern.

"You are not hurt?"

"I do not think so," Pincher answered. "What has happened?"

"An explosion." The stranger pointed, and, twisting round, Pincher saw that, in the middle of the quays, where he had noticed a tall building with a crane standing before, there was now a broken stone stump, while the houses in the street opposite were blackened ruins.

Pincher took the stranger's proffered arm gratefully as he stumbled to his feet. His leg hurt.

"You are just arrived?"

"Yes. For the first time."

"Come, then, Sir. My name, by the way, is Martin Walsh. There's an inn close by. Let me help you there."

Having left Pincher at the inn, the obliging gentleman went off to inspect the damage. He returned an hour later to report.

"The strangest business. An accident without a doubt." It seemed that a spark from a horse's shoe upon a cobble had ignited a keg of gunpowder, which had set off a large gunpowder store by the big central crane.

"The lower part of Winetavern Street is destroyed. Even the fabric of Christ Church Cathedral up the hill has been shaken." He smiled wryly. "I have heard of strangers bringing bad weather, Sir, but an explosion is something new. I hope you do not mean the Irish any further harm."

It was gentle banter, kindly meant. Pincher understood this very well. But he had never been very good at this sort of thing himself.

"Not," he said with grim satisfaction, "unless they are papists."

"Ah." The gentleman smiled sadly. "You will find many of those, Sir, in Dublin."

It was not until after this Good Samaritan had conducted him up to Trinity College and seen him safely into the care of the porter there that Doctor Pincher discovered that Mr.

Walsh himself was of the Roman faith. It was an embarrassing moment, it couldn't be denied. Yet how could he have guessed that the kindly stranger, so obviously English, so clearly a gentleman, could be a papist? Indeed, as Walsh had warned him, he was soon shocked to discover that many of the gentlefolk and better sort in Dublin were.

But this very discovery only showed, he was also to understand, how much work there was to be done.

1607 ...

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