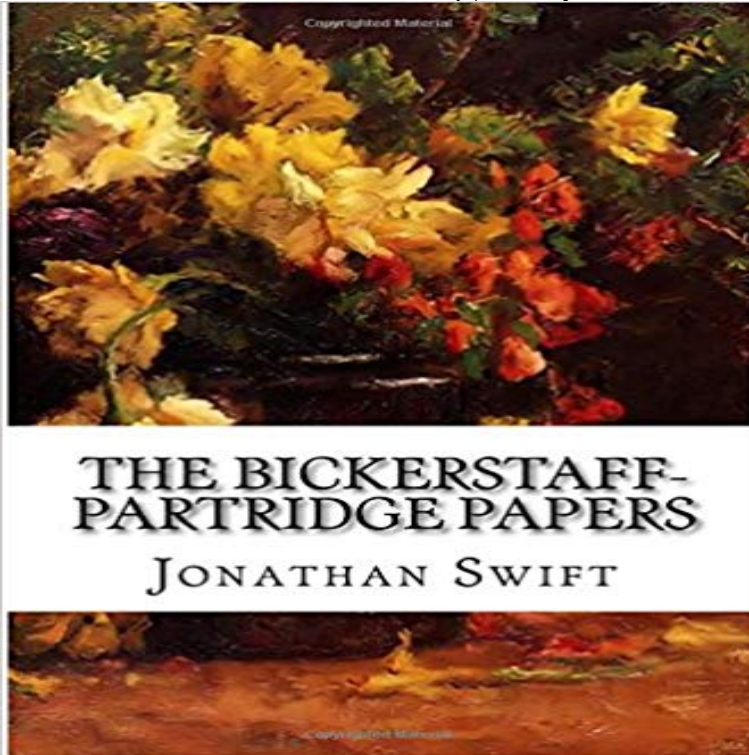


The Bickerstaff-Partridge Papers



Isaac Bickerstaff Esq was a pseudonym used by Jonathan Swift as part of a hoax to predict the death of then famous Almanacmaker and astrologer John Partridge. All Fools Day (now known as April Fools Day which falls on 1 April) was Swifts favourite of holidays and he often used this day to aim his satirically biting wit at non-believers in an attempt to make sin and folly bleed. Disgruntled by Partridges sarcastic attack about the infallible Church written in his 1708 issue of Merlinus Almanac, Swift projected carefully 3 letters and one Eulogy as an elaborate plan to predict Partridges infallible death to be revealed on April 1, All Fools Day. The first of the three letters, Predictions for the Year 1708, published in January 1708, predicts, among other things, the death of Partridge by a raging fever. The second letter, The Accomplishment of the First of Mr. Bickerstaffs Predictions, published in March 1708, Swift writes not as Bickerstaff but as a man employed in the Revenue where he confirms the imaginary Bickerstaffs prediction. To accompany The Accomplishments Swift also publishes an Elegy for Partridge in which, typical of Swifts satire, he blames not only Partridge, but those who purchase the Almanacs as well: Here, five Foot deep, lies on his Back, A Cobler, Starmonger, and Quack; Who to the Stars in pure Goodwill, Does to his best look upward still. Weep all you Customers that use His Pills, his Almanacks, or Shoes; And you that did your Fortunes seek, Step to his Grave but once a Week: This Earth which bears his Bodys Print, Youll find has so much Vertue int, That I durst pawn my Ears twill tell Whateer concerns you full as well, In Physick, Stolen Goods, or Love, As he himself could, when above.

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