

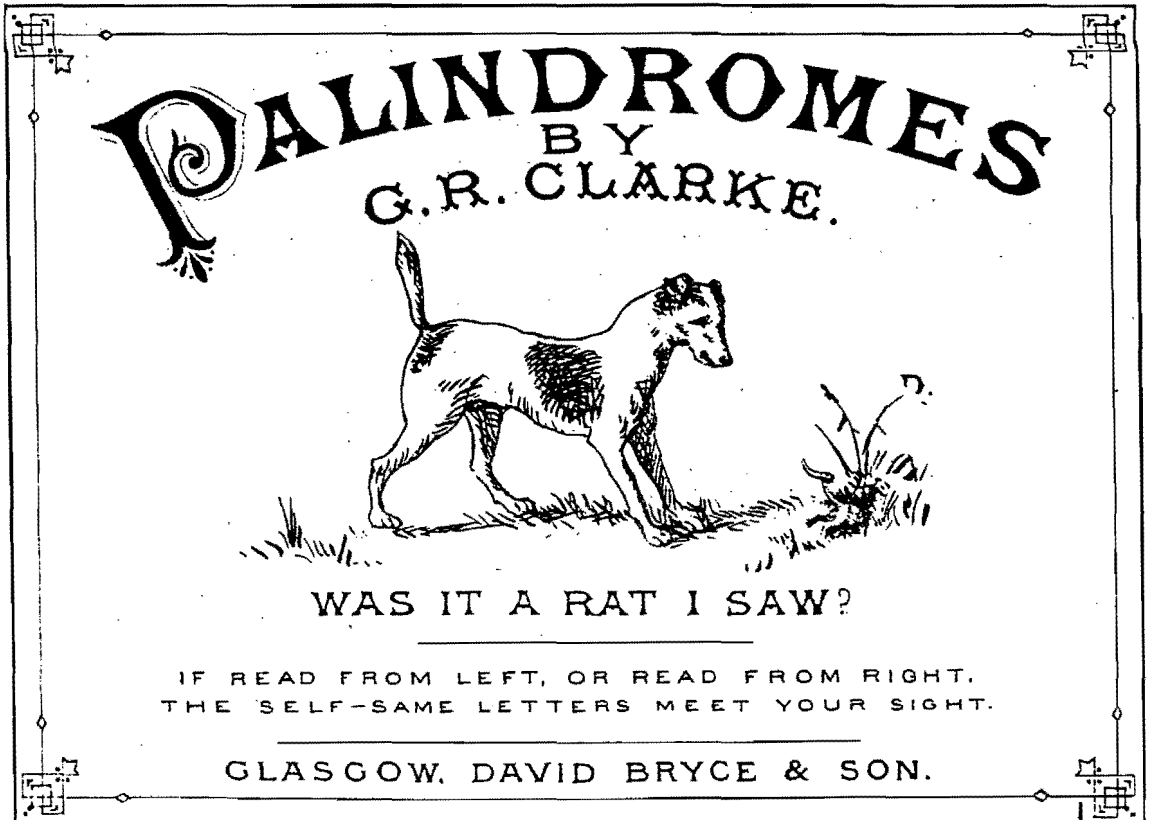
# AN EARLY WORK ON PALINDROMES

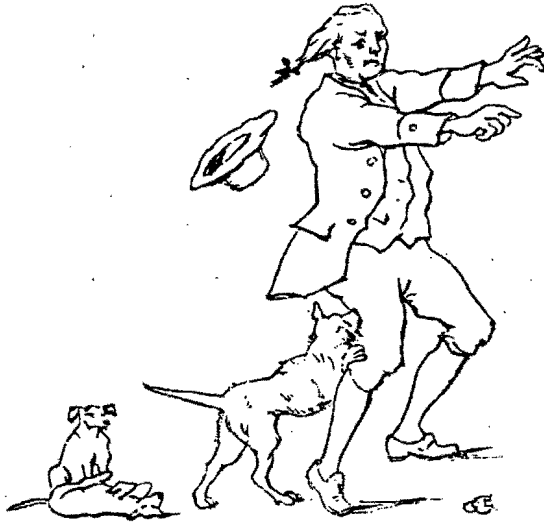
HERBERT PFEIFFER  
Offenbach, West Germany

Books dedicated exclusively to the subject of palindromes are very rare. One in great demand is the book Palindromes by G. R. Clarke (Glasgow, David Bryce & Son, 1887). Some years ago, Dmitri Borgmann told me in a letter that his firm, Research Unlimited, had not been able to find a copy of the book, and he doubted that it ever really existed.

Nevertheless, it does exist. Perhaps one reason for the difficulty in locating this work is the fact that Chambers Encyclopedia (1901), Shipley's Dictionary of World Literary Terms (1970), and Borgmann's Beyond Language (1967) all identify the author as Clark.

The book consists of 32 drawings illustrating palindromic phrases; two are reproduced below.





STEP NOT ON PETS.

17

### **WATCH YOUR LANGUAGE!**

This book on language usage, written by Robert Gorrell and published by the University of Nevada Press for \$21.95 in 1994, can be summarized in the author's words:

*This...is partly a book about usage--not about what is correct or incorrect, but about ways in which we can exploit the most useful tool available to human beings... Good writing certainly involves more than avoiding mistakes. Essentially it involves choices--of ideas, attitudes, sentence patterns, words...we try to anticipate results, the effect our language will have on a reader or listener.*

An ambitious program! Gorrell takes the reader on a quick tour of English grammar, with visits to *bête noires* such as like-as, split infinitives, sentence-ending prepositions, dangling participles, etc. Even a conscientious reader will find it difficult to remember all of his suggestions. The book concludes with a chapter "Fun With Language" which briefly surveys topics like palindromes, Tom Swifties, Anguish Languish (*Gladly, the cross-eyed bear*), sesquipedalian proverbs, puns, oxymorons, and nouns of multitude. The dust jacket depicts an imaginary scene illustrating 70 proverbs or hackneyed expressions.