

Kia Ora Professor Cole

My love affair with picture books began on my 4th birthday, 50 years ago. My Auntie Barbara gave me a copy of *Cole's Funny Picture Book*, also known as *The Family Amuser and Instructor to Delight the Children and Make Home Happier*.

From that day in February the book hardly left my side. It went to bed with me every night. My parents read me stories and poems from it and I spent hours poring over the pictures, being teased by the riddles and tantalised by the picture puzzles. By simply opening the pages I could visit Edward William Cole's private Music Hall of Delight.

Like most great books for children, *Cole's Funny Picture Book* is astonishing, entertaining and memorable. Some of the pictures in that book had such presence that they burned themselves into my mind for ever more.

I still find it a source of inspiration and often refer to it when writing and designing a new picture book of my own. I still have the copy that my Auntie Barbara gave me. It's very fragile and is only opened now under strict supervision. I have a more modern edition that I use for reference. My copy of the *Funny Picture Book* was from the 68th edition or reprint. The first edition was published as a limp-bound book in 1879 and contained barely half the content of the later editions.

With every subsequent edition during his lifetime, Edward William Cole, the author-compiler-publisher, would make alterations and additions until it became necessary to split the book into two volumes.

Cole, living above his famous book arcade at the time, compiled his funny picture books in his spare time, with scissors and paste from a great stack of books, newspapers and magazines from all over the world. Copyright was never allowed to get in the way. Mark Twain on a visit to Cole's famous Book Arcade in 1895 was intrigued to see how freely Cole had used his work in the *Funny Picture Book*.

As Cole's family grew into school children they were encouraged to write poems for the next edition. A flat rate of a shiny new sovereign was paid.

Often members of his own family were featured as characters in the book.

At other times, Cole would write something of his own, or devise an illustration to be finished by a professional artist. As edition followed edition, more and more of his own writing crept in. In the later editions of the *Funny Picture Book*, Cole expressed his views on issues such as "The Oneness of Man", "The Federation of the World", "The Foolishness of Extreme Fashion" and the "Beauty of Truth". Most of this material was reprinted from some of Cole's "serious" pamphlets that he privately published at regular intervals throughout his life. As a child I skipped over this material. But these writings are an interesting aspect of his work and provide a revealing glimpse into Cole's mind.

Mainly though, the *Funny Picture Book* was a platform for Cole's wonderful sense of fun. At the top of the contents page in Volume 1 he says- "To parents, grandparents, Uncles, Aunts and Friends - Every Good Child should be given one of these Books for being Good. Every Bad Child should be given one to try to make it Good."

For those of you not fortunate enough to have your own copy of *Cole's Funny Picture Book* you need to know that it is constructed along the lines of a big scrap book. In my edition, published after Cole's death, the cuttings, pictures and stories have been given the loose structure of a series of different lands - Girl Land, Boy Land, Temper Land, Greediness Land, Laziness Land, and so on. There is also a collection of "Baby Rhymes" and a "Comic Advertiser".

Advertising for Cole's Book Arcade crops up throughout the whole book. After some research into Edward William Cole's life, it's easy to think of his *Funny Picture Book* as an autobiography. It accurately reflects this extraordinary man's interests: his love of his family, his vaudevillian sense of humour, his astute business acumen and his genuine concern for his fellow man.

Edward William Cole was born in Woodchurch, Kent, England on January 4th, 1832. Cole's father died when Cole was four. His mother remarried and got into breeding in a big way. She produced a new baby every year for the next fourteen years. Cole's stepfather, a farmer and a staunch Wesleyan, taught him to read from the family bible, Cole left school as soon as he was old enough to work on the farm, but at the age of 16 left

his rather crowded home and went to seek work in London. After a short, miserable time there he emigrated to South Africa. And two years later he arrived in South Australia with a bad case of "gold fever". The "gold fever" didn't last long because Cole quickly realised that digging for gold was hard work and usually, very little gold was found. There were less strenuous ways of making a living on the diggings he decided. So on the largest black frying pan he could find, he whitewashed the words, COLE'S CORDIALS and went into business selling home-made lemonade. Lemonade was popular in the gold fields where miners sought to avoid drinking polluted water from hard-worked creeks and water holes. Typhoid was a big killer. By the time he was 21 he had 1000 pounds in the bank, but Cole's healthy bank balance was soon to disappear in a land and building venture that went terribly wrong. So he went back to the lemonade, but demands for lemonade had abated as more clean water became available. However he went on to have considerable success with a new line of "cider".

After a few more ventures of this nature, he left Castlemaine and moved to Melbourne. In no time at all he was pushing a barrow selling meat pies - "Cole's Delicious Mixed Meat Pies, None so Nice, 3d, Extra gravy free". He introduced a successful touch by making his pie crusts with a hole in the centre so that extra gravy could run into the meat as well as spill over the top. The gamblers and whores who made up most of his customers bought his pies mainly at night leaving the days free for Cole to go to the Public Library. He spent hours unearthing the essential similarities of the world's great religions. His notes grew and at the end of two years he decided to publish his work and call it *The Real Place In History Of Jesus And Paul*. Failing to find a publisher, he had to publish his findings as small pamphlets at his own cost. None of the booksellers in Melbourne would stock them, so he tried a small stack at the corner of his pie cart, but here they also failed to sell. A few people would read his pamphlets though, while they were eating their pies.

One day, an opportunity to buy a shelf of old books encouraged him to sweep the pies from his barrow and replace them with books. At first he stood outside Paddy's Market in Bourke Street and eventually took a stall there. Business boomed. He employed his first employee, Mr Pyke, a young lad of

15 chosen from some 50 applicants. He began to advertise in the evening paper but was disappointed with the results. So on the 23rd August, 1873 he decided to change his approach. He ran an advertisement with the following header: DISCOVERY OF A RACE OF HUMAN BEINGS WITH TAILS.

Several inches of tight copy followed, telling of the recent discovery by one Mr Thomas Jones of an unknown tribe of men with tails. They had been found in the remote jungle-clad mountains of New Guinea and called themselves the Elocwe (E.W. COLE spelled backwards). The advertisement ended with "To be Continued in Monday's Issue":

Monday's issue was a sell-out.

As the episodes of the serial continued day by day, Mr Jones' continuing narrative provided fascinating details about tail deportment, tail apparel and accessories. Further episodes dealt with such matters as tail barbers, tail milliners, tail jewellers and even a case of a tail restorer potion, so strong that if accidentally spilt on a severed dog tail, the tail grew a new dog. Mr Jones had come to the conclusion that it was probably best for man to have a tail and the series concluded with a statement from E.W.Cole himself - "E. W. Cole perfectly agrees with Mr Jones and begs particularly, earnestly and most affectionately to inform all the tailless inhabitants of Melbourne that he has for sale a great variety of ... TALES - Indian Tales, Australian Tales, Tales from the Arabian Nights". Cole's public goodwill and his business turnover grew side by side.

In late 1873, when it was rumoured that Paddy's Market was to be closed down, Cole shifted to new and larger premises further down Bourke street. Inspired by the Royal Arcade, a popular shopping spot in Melbourne at the time, he renovated his new space with pictures, mirrors and a vast framework from the roof incorporating the gas-pipe lettering of COLE'S BOOK ARCADE with flaming jets every few inches. On the exterior, he hired a team of painters to paint the entire front white to contrast with the great black letters of COLE'S BOOK ARCADE. Then from the veranda roof, arching over the name they painted a brilliant rainbow. Now whenever a rainbow appeared in the sky it would broadcast a delightful reminder of COLE'S BOOK ARCADE to everyone, young and old, far and wide.

His brash commercial use of the sign of God's Covenant was deplored from a number of pulpits but the mass of Melbourne thought his rainbow was lovely and pointed it out to their children. His arcade went from strength to strength. More and more staff were employed. He installed a dozen cane chairs so that people could be comfortable while they read any book, right through to its finish if they wanted to, without ever being pressed to buy. Cole had the ceiling of the arcade opened and replaced with a glass roof above the second floor. The weakened upper floor was supported by polished brass pillars and children gazed fascinated at their own distorted faces in them. At Christmas time, Cole dressed his all-male staff in scarlet jackets with COLE'S BOOK ARCADE embroidered on golden arm bands. Cole never wore a red jacket himself however - he retained his old modest dignity. He continued to run novelty advertisements in the paper, often rewriting nursery rhymes to include mention of his arcade. The Melburnians loved his mad ads and wondered what would come up next. Cole's advertisement on the 3rd July, 1875 had them all puzzled however. Was he serious, they all wondered?

The advertisement ran as follows: "A Good Wife Wanted - Twenty Pounds Reward. J. Edward William Cole of the Book Arcade, Bourke Street wish to obtain a person for a wife with the following characteristics: she must be a Spinster of thirty-five or six years of age, good tempered, intelligent, honest, truthful, sober, chaste, cleanly neat, but not extravagantly or absurdly dressy; industrious, frugal, moderately educated and a lover of home". He continued by elaborating on each of these requirements more extensively, dwelling particularly on "dress": "She must be neat in dress, and not extravagant or absurd; and on this point I shall speak very plainly. One of the greatest causes of unhappy homes, and one of the greatest curses to the well-being of the civilised world, is the inordinate, the almost insane love of unnecessary dress in woman. It has made, and does make millions of homes unhappy that might otherwise be happy; it has indirectly sent and is sending thousands and tens of thousands of striving honest men through the Insolvency Court and to prison for debt." About a wife's need to be good tempered he said - "a sulky, a hasty, a

scolding, a nagging or a fretting person is a curse in a house, while a good-tempered one is always a joy."

He received many replies but answered only one. On the 10th August the same year, a little over a month later, he married Eliza Jordon from Tasmania and moved into a newly refurbished apartment above the Arcade. Their first child, a daughter, was named Ada Belinda so that her initials would read as ABC.



COLE'S FUNNY PICTURE BOOK

Even before the birth of their first baby, Cole was at odds with the "boringly sanctimonious style of so many writers of children's books". He wrote, "You may try and try again to drive an ordinary dry school-book lesson into the infant mind and make very little progress. But take an illustrated edition of a nursery rhyme ... and call the little one to you, begin to teach it - how eagerly, how intently does it begin to learn now!"

Thus Cole, the religious eclectic, conceived the production of a best-of-all children's book, its contents to comprise the most admirable pictures, stories, puzzles, jokes and verses from all the other children's books. He already had a dipping collection of poems, comic writings and passages of philosophy in a scrap book. Here was a start and it now became his hobby to keep a lookout for more suitable material while handling the numerous books and magazines stocked by the Arcade. Cole helped himself to verses from Edward Lear's *Book Of Nonsense*. He steered clear of the Tenniel illustrations in *Alice In Wonderland* because of the book's recent publication and success.

But he found a rich source for his collection in the illustrated papers and periodicals for adults that had burgeoned throughout the English-speaking world since Punch was launched in 1841. Often a picture's original caption was too "adult". He became adept at inventing captions which effectively converted an "adult" picture into a "children's" picture. As a counterpoint to

many of the funny pictures he felt justified in filling voids in the text with some of his own funny advertisements.

His "Men With Tails" story and Old Mother Hubbard with his additional verses about her continual visits to Cole's Book Arcade, were used. As well, he included a story that had been inspired by the time when various people claimed to have sighted a giant sea serpent in the sea.

Cole, in the Melbourne Herald, had published "The True History Of The Great Sea Serpent" whose name was John Smith and whose age was 5000 years old. In his picture book Cole was able to have this story illustrated and he explained how the Sea Serpent had now been specially chartered to bring constant supplies of books from England to Cole's Book Arcade while displaying 2,000 of the arcade's beautiful rainbow signs along its immense length. Cole was delighted with the commissioned illustration for the Sea Serpent story and predicted it would be one of the most popular in the book.

However it was overshadowed by the picture of "Cole's Patent Whipping Machine For Flogging Naughty Boys" which contrasted with a hopelessly inferior machine that had been patented by a dunderhead named Snooks.

Snook's machine, it was explained, had proved a great disappointment when purchased by a distracted school-master who had been having only middling success with punishments suggested by a selection of school-masters to whom he had written seeking advice. He had received a mixed bag of replies:

From the Training School of Rugby wrote Headmaster Wist:

"Just take a handful of their hair and give a sharp, short twist!"

From the High School, San Francisco, wrote Headmaster Power:

Make them stoop and hold their fingers on the floor for just an hour!"

And from the model school in Peking, Professor Cha Han Coo suggested:

"Just put their hands into the stocks and beat them with bamboo!"

Our distracted schoolmaster put all this advice to one side and mistakenly thought it best to buy the whipping machine from Mr Snooks. It proved to be totally ineffectual. By contrast, an entirely satisfied schoolmaster wrote a glowing report of Cole's superior whipping machine which very effectively whipped 741 boys the first day it was installed.

The machine to deal with naughty girls was called Cole's Electro-Micro Scolding Machine, "designed to severely scold 700 girls per hour". It consisted of three parts – the phonograph, the microphone and the wonder phone which could cause sound to travel for forty miles in all directions. Here is a sample of the sort of scolding the machine could do:

*"Betsy Bertha Bridget Belinda Bowing,
Will you be quiet and go with your sewing?
Fanny Florence Frederica Florinda Flynn,
How cruel of you to prick Jane with a pin.
Maude Mary Martha Matilda Moyes,
Sends letters to and flirts with naughty boys.*

One must remember that Cole was an exceedingly kind and indulgent parent. He never once hit any of his children or scolded them. You can imagine how much the Cole children enjoyed their father's elaborate whipping machine joke. It was one of his more hard-hitting criticisms of the education system of the time. Cole was troubled by the thought of his own happy children having to soon be subjected to school's tyranny.

By the middle of 1879 Cole had collected enough material for his *Funny Picture Book*. It was decided to sell the book for one shilling. He would dearly have loved to have seen a rainbow on the cover but costs put this out of the question. After a huge publicity campaign the 62 page limp-bound picture book was published on Christmas Eve 1879. It was a huge and instant success. It received great reviews. Cole ran an advertisement saying that he would pay 100 pounds to anyone who could prove that his *Funny Picture Book* was not the funniest picture book in the world. No-one could.

Cole's Book Arcade was the meeting place for people from all over Melbourne but its commercial situation was not as good as it could have been. It was affected by the adjacent Eastern Market which was not the success that the local authorities had hoped for. The fine, purpose built building was mainly empty. Stall holders were reluctant to move in. Cole thought about the problem and decided to take over the lease of the building. Then he placed an advertisement in the paper to all market traders, carnival men, street entertainers and so on, saying that all stalls in

the Eastern Market could be occupied entirely rent free for six months. After an initial hesitation the stalls were quickly taken.

Most of the sideshows were of general family appeal. There were coconut-shies and hoop-la, Punch and Judy, a Gypsy fortune teller, jugglers, and "The Horse With Its Tail Where Its Head Ought To Be".

As time went by, many of the stalls changed hands. This sometimes brought its problems and embarrassments. There were, for instance, some half dozen shooting galleries. They used real rifles and on one occasion an attendant was accidentally shot dead. A lady wrestler who challenged any man to try and kiss her was felled by one of her successful challengers who, while kissing her, managed to break her jaw. Furthermore, the market was becoming the haunt of Melbourne's infamous larrikin "pushes" like the Crutchies and the Flying Angels. The Eastern Market was getting rough and Cole's relationship with the City Corporation was not good. It was time to move the Book Arcade away from the market.

Cole's Funny Picture Book was now selling all over Australia. Towards the end of 1882 a second edition with 16 additional pages was published. The additional pages included a collection of puzzle-pictures.

The new site for the Book Arcade was further down Bourke Street away from the Eastern Market. Cole completely renovated the old Spanish Restaurant, a building three stories high, with a facade of 90 feet and a depth of 120 feet. Cole wanted to suggest a feeling of lavish limitlessness and this was eventually achieved through Cole's own designs. Mirrors and reflecting brass columns induced an on-and-on-and-on feeling. As with the release of his funny picture book he chose to attach the opening of his new arcade to a day that already had a festive atmosphere: Melbourne Cup Day 1883. Cole loved the carnival atmosphere of Melbourne at Cup time - this is not to suggest in any way that he loved racing or some of the activities associated with it.

Congestion on opening day became so alarming that Cole had his staff sell some of his famous tokens embossed with his own philosophies at the door to control entry to the new arcade.

By now Cole was 51. He had six children. As his older children became rather overdue to start school Cole's attention became focussed on the

school trade. He now published a series of exercise books, retailing for a penny, which had riddles and jokes and a few pictures from his *Funny Picture Book* printed inside their covers. In small print in a Notice to the Teacher, Cole suggested that children would learn better if school could be made more enjoyable. This statement obviously didn't win any friends amongst the educationalists of the day because although Cole's exercise books initially sold well, sales soon fell away as more and more teachers forbade their pupils to use them.

Cole was stirred to write:

"There is a vast amount of precious time wasted in our schools and colleges. Teach persons to read and you put them in the way to educate themselves, and you give them the key to the accumulated literature and knowledge of the world, and if there is anything in them, they will go on learning in whatever directions they choose."

Cole had always encouraged people to read freely in his arcade. He now provided over 100 cane chairs in the new arcade to make his readers comfortable.

The two oldest Cole children were eventually enrolled at a private school whose policy was based on the revolutionary play-learning approach called "Kindergarten". The school was run by a man named Smith who asked his pupils to address him not as Mr Smith or even "Sir" but as Daddy Smith.

After about six months though the two Cole children left Smith's school and were taught at home by a young couple named McCormick. At the same time Cole gave way to the pressure of his wife and children to return to live in an apartment above the Book Arcade. Mrs Eliza Cole loved living in the city and she loved being able to drop into the Arcade whenever she felt like it. In fact her favourite corner, where she sat most afternoons receiving and entertaining friends, became known as "Queen's Corner". To the six Cole children, "Pa" was their idol and they were his delight. His most enjoyable social life was staying at home with them.

The top gallery floor beneath the new arcade's glass roof remained empty for some time until Cole decided to extend his stock range to include ornaments. There were vases in a thousand varieties, china lavishly gilded

and scrolled, embellished with fruit, flowers and figures. Sometimes a pyramid of ruby glassware shone like a mammoth jewel brightly gas-lit from its centre. There was a life-sized metal dog with a clock in its side which went for 8 days; the dog put its tongue out and wagged its tail 60 times a minute in the most life-like manner.

In the late 1880s the Arcade was further extended to include a new music department on Little Collins Street. A new attraction, the famous "Hen that Cackled and Laid Eggs" was installed. When a penny was dropped into a slot the life-like hen cackled raucously and laid a tin egg which would contain a sweet or some tiny toy.

A new confectionery department, largely conceived by Cole, was opened during these years too. The walls were flanked with solid rows of glass panels rising chest-high from the floor, a different toffee, chocolate, caramel and so on in each one. From the ceiling, peppermint walking sticks and chocolate dolls dangled amidst twinkling gold and silver orbs, stars and bells and baubles. And the whole lot was surrounding by even more mirrors.

Cole ran his book arcade like the conductor of a huge orchestra. He was in charge, made all major decisions and over-saw every department. In the major depression that struck Melbourne in the early 1890s, Cole went out of his way to keep all his employees. One of his shop assistants stole 1000 pounds to pay some urgent debts. Instead of firing the man Cole kept him on and simply asked the man to pay the money back in instalments.

The late 1890s saw a good deal of expansion for Cole's business. Extra premises were opened in Melbourne and new book arcades were opened in Sydney and Adelaide. Inspiration for new and even more wonderful attractions for his Book Arcade came from a non-fiction best seller, *The Speech of Monkeys* by R. L. Garner.

Garner contended that "the complexity of vocal communication made by the simian race should not be seen as elemental cries of alarm, hunger, danger etc., but that it warranted the name of speech". Furthermore Garner was convinced that monkeys laughed. He suggested that "what causes monkeys to laugh would have caused primitive (and not so primitive) humans to laugh." Cole wasted no time. He had a store room converted into a monkey cage and arranged for the importation of various species of

monkeys in mated pairs. He hired Harry Grist, a theatrical artist, to paint the walls of the cage with tropical jungle scenes and employed a happy-natured coloured youth from Mauritius as the monkeys' keeper.

At about the same time, Cole put a most unusual black man on display at the entrance to "Wonderland" downstairs in the Shilling Room. Simon Gabriel was notable for in recent years having turned from the chocolate colour of his Portuguese parents to a notably pale white. He had photographs of himself as a black man and then as a white man. He had married a white Australian woman and had a family of 7 half caste children. The eldest was born when he was black, the second when he was turning and the rest when he was white. He presented himself to Cole after reading Cole's recently published pamphlet, *The Cause Of Colour In Mankind*. In this Cole contended that skin colour was quite simply governed by climate. Therefore, white races inhabiting tropical zones would gradually become black over a number of generations, just as black races who remain long enough in temperate zones would eventually become white. Cole gave Simon Gabriel the job of turnstile keeper of Wonderland. A prominent notice stated that this man was most unusual and people were encouraged to guess his nationality. Cole was delighted to have evidence of there being no difference between the black man and the white man when the colour of skin is removed. But Melbourne was still talking about Cole's monkeys and in this mood a great number of people saw Gabriel the black man turned white, as simply part of the Cole's Book Arcade show.

On an even more serious note, coinciding with the 1901 Royal visit of the Duke and Duchess of York, Cole issued a new medal with a stern message.

It reflected his preoccupation with what he regarded as "an evil blot on the glorious advent of Australian federation": the determination of the new Federal Government to implement the White Australia Policy. This was a monstrous hypocrisy in Cole's view – diametrically opposed to the idea of the unity of man.

He published a pamphlet called *A White Australia Impossible*.

He began ... "God hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth. This just and humanitarian doctrine was taught by two Asiatic coloured men, Jesus and Paul." He went on to point out that

no man can support such a law and remain a Christian. Then he said: "Eventually the hundreds of millions of China will gradually awaken, and the hundreds of millions of India will gradually awaken and millions of them will come and settle in Australia: and if we are wise they will come as invited guests instead of as armed hosts of uninvited enemies."

He largely took it for granted that all such coloured migration would happily populate the vast area of Australia which whites would not or could not utilise. He went on to ask, "What white man has any idea of his racial origin beyond two or three generations?"

Cole's next pamphlet, *The Better Side Of The Chinese Character* was aimed at the general public who on the whole held strong racist views of the oriental. It seems odd to us now, I hope, that the author of this pamphlet should be comfortable calling a young Chinese boy in his *Funny Picture Book*, "Little Chinky Chow-Chow". Cole also repeatedly depicted in his Picture Book, black people, which he called "niggers", as silly, simple minded folk, dressed in ill-fitting and patched clothes. No doubt it was a reflection of the thinking of his time.

Another pamphlet followed - *The Oneness Of Man And The Coming Federation Of The World*. As with most of his other "serious" writings it is easy to dismiss Cole's naive ideas about the unity of mankind as the work of a crank. He starts well by saying "In physical qualities and in general structure all men are similar throughout the world." But then white Anglo paternalism, prevalent in his day, takes over. "Some nations are more advanced than others, some are better educated. All those inhabiting the tropical countries have become more or less enervated by the torrid heats of the climate, and, for some time, may have to be governed and guided, like children, by the more civilised nations, until they are qualified to take their place in the great family of man."

Cole's essay, *The Oneness Of Man* concluded with a collection of 570 portraits of the races of mankind. The reader is invited to study each face and ponder Cole's philosophy that basically all men are the same. "When you look at them face by face," he promised, "you can find the features of someone you have known or seen in everyone of them."

Cole continued to control the crowds by selling medals embossed with some of Cole's simple philosophies about the love of fellow man.

"All men are brothers." "The people everywhere that we do not know are as nice as the people that we do know."

Christmas 1907 saw the publication of *Cole's Funny Picture Book Vol 2*. It was never the popular or financial success that Vol 1 was.

He continued to publish more pamphlets including the extraordinary piece of naivety called, *The Blessing And Curse Of Tobacco And The Substitution Of A Healthy Apple-Eating Habit For An Unhealthy Tobacco-Smoking Habit*.

The pamphlet puts forward a substitute for the habit of smoking: the eating of apples. This was Cole's indisputably original idea and he was incapable of seeing any reason why it should not be taken seriously. With the advances in cheaper colour printing Cole inserted a new coloured section in volumes of the *Funny Picture Book* featuring apples so life-like that they were calculated to make a mouth-watering reader want to pick them off the page.

Cole was now in his late 70s. Two shocking incidents which followed one another badly affected him for the rest of his life. An attack by one of his beloved monkeys required 16 stitches in Cole's scalp and a freak accident to Eliza Cole's leg, which necessitated an operation without anaesthetic, resulted in her dying of shock. Cole went into a deep decline for several months. However, he eventually rallied round and was soon to be seen moving about the arcade once more. But the days of the great Book Arcade were numbered and so was Cole's control of the arcade's business. Cole lived on for another seven years, finally dying on the 16th December 1918 in his huge rented property in Essenden which he nick-named The Parthenon.

The great Book Arcade floundered on, producing annual balance sheets that heavily disguised the true state of affairs. The attitude of most of the staff was to stick to the sinking ship and make the most of it. There were cases of staff drawing their wages without bothering to show up to work. Others ran suburban businesses of their own, some even drawing stock from the arcade.

Cole's monkeys were the first of the Arcade's unique attractions to go. The best specimens were taken by the Melbourne zoo, the rest destroyed. The talking birds in the fernery suffered the same fate as the monkeys. After the issue of the 1928 Balance Sheet the trustees were finally convinced of the severity of the Book Arcade's financial problems.

So Cole's Book Arcade, which Cole had so proudly advertised as "the prettiest sight in Melbourne" and as "the Palace of the Intellect"; which had been the warm, bright heart of Melbourne city and had built Cole a fortune over all those years during which it had never shown a loss, put up the shutters for the last time at the end of June, 1929.

I was born 17 years later, far too late to have the chance of visiting one of the wonders of the world so close to home, but I have had *Cole's Funny Picture Book* with me for most of my life.

I am very grateful to have the opportunity today to publicly acknowledge my debt to the work of Professor Cole. By all accounts he was a shy man but with the talent and vision to create a book shop that Barnum and Bailey would have been proud of. He was a business tycoon with the eye of a child. And he was a modest man who wasn't afraid of superlatives.

Cole's true work of creative genius was his Book Arcade but the everlasting monument to his enormous sense of fun and love of people is his *Funny Picture Book*.

So, when in the sky a bow is displayed,
Be sure that you think of the Book Arcade.