**Cheltenham 1919**

**Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate (Parramatta, NSW: 1888 - 1950), Saturday 22 February 1919, page 8**

CHELTENHAM.

AN APPRECIATION.

“Now mind what you say or do,” said my companion, “Chelty's a shy creature, timid as a gazelle and as beautiful, but quite heartless.” “I cares for nobody, no, not I, and nobody cares for me. That's about her motto.” We were not talking about a human being, but of a place, a hamlet known as Cheltenham - Cheltenham the Chaste. My companion has a house there, and he dwells there, so it appears, but he says he doesn't ‘live’ there. All he does there is 'sleep.' Living is too active a state of being. It's the understood thing in Cheltenham, so it seems, and “the unwritten law” of the place, to be quite 'passive’: things may 'happen,' but no self-respecting resident will do anything whatever. Tradesmen from other restless, low-class suburbs, such as Eastwood and Epping, may deliver goods there, but no shop is permitted to desecrate Cheltenham. The postman is, of course, tolerated as a necessary evil, and the telephone, like the grasshopper, is a burden, otherwise the calm repose which marks the caste of Vere-de-Vere must ever prevail. Primitive perhaps, idyllic indeed, but frightfully tedious all the same. How all this originated, or who first started the idea of going idyllic, nobody seems to know, but it has become a habit of the place. Unlike many other habits it is harmless at present, though developments may ensue. One may be born in Cheltenham, and some careless, callous creatures have been known to die there, quite unpremeditatedly, but dying is, after all, only passive, so long as one dies quietly and decently. Ono suicide or even an attempted murder and the place would collapse — same as Jericho. People have been known to leave Cheltenham, but no one has ever returned, not even an Anzac. Dwelling-houses are sometimes permitted to be built there, but only for properly accredited intending occupants, who must be owners as well as occupants, not just common rent-paying tenants. Exclusiveness is carried so far that neither postmaster nor stationmaster is allowed to live in the place. Cheltenham is adorned, prettily adorned, with a bowling-green, and once a week or so a few alleged players, gaudily attired, stroll passively and meditatively about, like “superb” actors on the theatrical stage, just for the sake of scenic effect. No one there ever gets excited; in fact, excitement is tabooed — at, any rate in public. No one even develops any desire or capacity for exertion — even the fettlers become infected with the virus of inertia, which is so dominantly and characteristically peculiar to Cheltenham, and they work while there as if labour were not to be taken seriously, but rather homoeopathically, and in spasms, good humouredly, and in small doses. Dogs have been known to bark at night, occasionally, and there was once, years ago, a crowing cock. Of him “the rest is silence,” and R.I.P. Even water from the taps flows placidly and languorously, and garden sprinklers sprinkle quite coyly. Whisky and other potent spirits are said to become quite mild and mellow and to lose their inherent viciousness when imbibed in the calm atmosphere of Cheltenham, where apparently “it is always afternoon,” and the languid are at rest. Most of my information is from an outsider who lives at Epping, and what he says may not be quite true, but the sedateness of the place has certainly had such a soporific effect on me that I feel quite diffident (rather an unusual feeling for me to have) about committing these statements of alleged facts to writing, and, metaphorically speaking, I have the impression that I am treading on or desecrating hallowed ground, and, perchance, perpetrating not only a breach of the conventions of hospitality, but rank sacrilege by speaking and writing so familiarly and flippantly of these Olympian Heights, the abode of the gods of Cheltenham, where nothing ever happens, and it happens all the while.

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CHELTENHAM.

A GRATEFUL ACKNOWLEDGMENT.

Another correspondent to 'The Argus': — “Salutations and many thanks, oh appreciative one! The pleasure afforded to the residents of our shy, beautiful, timid and chaste little hamlet, Cheltenham, by your kind notice and interest in us and our mode of life, is inestimable. Wanting nothing more than to continue our peaceful, idyllic existence uninterrupted, who are we to be overwhelmed by all this admiration and appreciation Do we not already recognise that it is only through the kindness and tolerance of our neighbours that we have “a place -in the sun” at all. Could any tradesman be expected to make a living in such a humble place as Cheltenham? Could he be expected even to try, when we are surrounded by such progressive districts! Our gratitude to the postman is unbounded for his kindness in delivering our mail. But were he to settle In Cheltenham might he not stagnate to such an extent that there would be only a weekly delivery of letters. And the telephone also. Every kindness is shown towards us by the Exchange girls. Though we have always heard that the Epping exchange is a busy one, no attendant is ever too hurried to try to give a Cheltenhamite a clear line, if possible, thus bringing us a little into touch with the great outside world. Is it our fault that we die? It is possible, even probable, that many of us would like to continue our existence, but if Providence has ordained otherwise, what can we do but submit! Boys from here, when old enough, have gone to the war, and their parents wait and hope for their return, even though not as Anzacs. Some who have gone from sleepy Cheltenham have given their lives. Also, Cheltenham women have been known to give their time, and men their substance, to help the noble Anzacs in which we are unfortunately lacking. Even girls from this sylvan glade, haying heard vague rumours of war and war's alarms, have tried in their small way to help their country and her heroes. As for a house to rent, who but those who have lived among the busy haunts of men and become weary of the madding crowd would seek such a secluded spot in which to end their days, where the dog barketh not, neither is the crow of the domestic fowl heard. Is it possible that busy, wakeful men, like station (or post) masters would be content to live in a somnolent corner like Cheltenham? But we are grateful for what we have, and again, gratitude wells up within us, when our neighbours in their gaudy attire are joined by residents of Chatswood and Epping and we may watch them disport themselves and stroll about on our pretty bowling-green and not only on our bowling-green but also on our croquet and tennis lawns. It is the nearest approach we can have to the theatre while the influenza epidemic still rages. And, unfortunately for our tiny garden plots, almost the sole interest in this, our rustic existence, the flow of water from our taps and sprinklers is not only languorous and coy, but intermittent. This is merely the appreciation of a school girl who is leaving this quiet secluded spot for the wild life of boarding school, hoping, if she lives, to have the unique distinction of returning to the home of the gods — shy, beautiful, timid and chaste Cheltenham.”