

work might not last much longer. Fear was shown by those dependent on their families, that the relative who was the source of support might lose his or her job, or might marry and with other demands be unable to help. Fear was shown by those dependent (wholly or partly) on charity, that they would not receive sufficient or continuous help.

The fear of being forced into some institution was widespread and intense. Then there was the fear of illness. Of course the fear of illness is not confined to the poor or aged, but it is most serious for the poor, because they literally cannot afford to be sick. It is one thing to be ill, with the care and comforts which money can buy, added to the care and consideration that can be given by relatives who have leisure; but it is another matter to be ill when almost penniless, and when relatives are already overburdened with work. The combination of being old and poor and ill is tragic!

By this I do not mean to imply that I found all the people I interviewed unhappy. Many were cheerful; some because of fine character, and some because they were so stupid or so selfish that they did not realize, or did not care, that they were a burden to their families or to society. On the whole, however, I was impressed by the worthiness of most of the people I met, by their simple virtues of unselfishness, cheerfulness and courage, and by the dignity with which they bore their hardships.