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The Rector's Wife

I've just finished reading *The Rector's Wife*, a novel by Joanna Trollope. The rector's wife is an intelligent, attractive woman who feels trapped by the rules and regulations imposed on the wife of their rector by the men and women in a rural parish in England. She had been a loyal wife, baking cakes and chairing various parish committees, until the day he learned that he had not received the post of archdeacon that he had confidently expected. The promise of a better salary as archdeacon had kept her quiet in the struggle to balance the needs of her family and the demands of her position as the rector's wife with her personal need to be her own person. She solved the problem of financing her young daughter's needed transfer to a better school by getting a job as a clerk in a local supermarket. That rebellion against the expectations of her husband and of the members of his parish escalated into a rebellion from most of the restrictions of her life.

The story of the "rector's wife" is a metaphor for the problems of many women of the latter part of this century. The excesses of the women's lib movement have troubled me for some time. I have felt many of the restrictions but have simultaneously reacted negatively to the solutions many women have found. Reading this book has impressed on me the fact that I have a profound dislike of any kind of revolution. Evolution suits me in almost every case whether it be government, social problems, or personal development. Revolution so often destroys part of that which it is designed to correct. Wiping clear the slate and starting over is not the efficient way to design a new way of anything. I prefer the idea of slowly achieving goals. To solve many of the ills of our society (homelessness, crime, even minor discontent) by attacking such base roots as illiteracy by tutoring the illiterate seems a more desirable way than passing punitive laws to restrict welfare and violence. I realize my way is slow and may not address many ills immediately, but I think my way could be used along with some other more visionary plans to bring about a closer ideal in society.

