

becomes solitaire. The former demands initiative; the latter only shuffling of the cards. It is the difference between competing and computing, between compelling and compiling. We grow to desire the second of these functions.

Most of us get to believe that we are dealing with dead things, or things as remote as the rings of Saturn, which have no direct application to life about us. This is especially true of the inside service. Collectors of customs are handling actual coins of the realm; postmasters are stamping real letters; engineers are building wood and iron bridges. We must not include them in the list of solitaire players. The danger of the deadly routine is always more pronounced at head office than anywhere else.

How can we break up, or break away from, the solitaire habits that tend to enchain us? The same cards are used for solitaire as for poker; the difference is in the spirit of the game. So the same problems of administration are before us all, and it is up to us to decide whether we are to regard them as lifeless things, bits of pasteboard, scraps of paper, or as the leaves of fate potent to direct each one's future.

All depends on our attitude towards the game. Are we playing for fun or for keeps? The clerk who plays for fun, or just to fill in the time, is he who regards the day's work and its problems as mere shadows, the things themselves that cast the shadow being far away like the Moon at an eclipse. The clerk who plays for keeps places himself in the very centre of the

transaction with which he is dealing and refuses to believe that he is called upon to play a perfunctory part. Be he but a junior something-or-other, he insists on a show for his money.

I am well aware that these insistent people come in for a certain line of criticism. They are accused of nursing their job until they can make a chief clerkship of it. There may be some truth in the charge when applied to some cases, but in the long run, all Chicago to the contrary, it is men and not positions that are classified. In other words, every job is what a man makes it. We have seen deputy ministers who have degraded their high posts so that they are little more than envelope-openers, and we have seen messengers who have wielded authority in their departments as if born to the purple. The deputies hold on to their pay by virtue of the statutes, and the messengers may never rise nominally above their station. But all rewards are not by pay-cheques. The satisfaction of doing and directing things must be counted when we tote up the column of a man's income.

This brings up the question: What are we playing for? So intent have we all been during these recent years on matching our wits against the Cost of Living that we are prone to consider that our neighbors as well as we ourselves have only one standard of value — the dollar. It does not take long to dispose of that fallacy. Would you become a garbage-collector at three thousand a year? Your wife might insist on it if you wore false whiskers when at work, but you would never be happy and some day would stow yourself in a galvanized can and not get out until you were

thrown into the incinerator. The dollar is not everything. Your snobbish soul recognizes other, if not higher, claims.

Even as some men play solitaire because they are too lazy to drum up a quorum for Auction, or too cowardly to risk a five-spot at Stud, so there are eminently respectable persons who hug the daily routine of their offices. On the other hand, as there are some who smell out a poker party across the city's length and cannot be kept out of it, and who will toss coppers or doubloons at a knife stuck in the floor rather than forego the joys of combat, so the adventurous souls will find fields for adventure in whatever the day at the office brings. Again, the dollar is not everything. Gamblers are not so keen as the pious landlord on money-getting. The play's the thing.

Poker-playing is a hard profession. It keeps one up at nights, it brings wrinkles under the eyes, and challenges a man to be square when often it appears to pay to be crooked. The same can be said of a position of trust. There are arduous nights, and wrinkles, and temptations ahead of anyone who tackles a job seriously. Solitaire, whether played at home or in the office, has no such exactions. In her right hand is length of days, even if in her left hand there be not riches and honors. "Idiot's delight" it has been called, hardly an alluring label for those who have "drunk delight of battle with their peers" on the green fields of chance. You may like solitaire. Mrs. Wegg thinks it is better to play a real game with the boys. Sometimes I bring home the bacon.

