

SHALL TOBACCO FOLLOW ALCOHOL?

ON July first alcohol is to make its final bow and retire gracefully from the American scene. Already we hear that plans are under way to convince the American people that tobacco should follow suit. What about it? Is it a parallel case? Ought we who have strongly favored the prohibition of the manufacture and sale of alcoholic drinks to use our influence also for the prohibition of the growing and sale of tobacco?

We do not think so. It is not a parallel case.

Who ever heard of a man committing murder or rape or felonious assault "while under the influence of—tobacco"?

Who ever heard of a man's children going without shoes because he spent all his money on—tobacco?

Who ever heard of a woman's ruin made possible because she had been "plied with—tobacco"?

Who ever heard of half a dozen men sitting round a table of an evening and each one of them compelled to smoke six cigars before he quit, in order that each one might have an opportunity to treat?

Who ever saw a man so much a slave to tobacco that if he smoked three cigarets in succession he was sure to go home—if at all—a reeling, befuddled imbecile because he could not control his appetite and stop smoking?

Who ever heard of a wife and children dreading the husband and father's return on Saturday night because he was sure to have smoked too much as soon as he got his pay envelope?

Smoking may be an unwise habit. It is unquestionably bad for the immature. The non-smoker may be healthier, more thrifty, more pleasing to the senses of his near associates, more efficient, longer lived. But we do not believe that taken by and large the smoking of tobacco is such a menace to society that the smoker's supply of "the weed" should be kept from him by the force of governmental action. That is precisely what we have believed—and do believe—about the drinking of alcohol. But not about tobacco. That is another story.