

WET VS DRY
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Illustrative of the fact that it is sometimes better to leave well enough alone was our city's attempt to legalize liquor by the drink in the recent voting referendum. Although the issue was merely one about how liquor should be served in the three hundred or so establishments in which it was already being consumed, it developed into an argument between the pious dry and the reprobate wets. As should have been expected, the fever of the sanctified prohibitionists (with an assist from some groups of special interest) was more than a match for the apathy of the lackadaisical tipplers who must have been guzzling when they should have been voting.

By a small but definite majority, the forces of good triumphed over those of evil, and Columbus cannot look forward to the pleasures of the cocktail lounge or the corner pub anytime soon. Theoretically, with the referendum over and done with, the situation should have reverted to what it was on the day before the voting. But the vigor of duty and virtue once aroused is not easily suppressed. What apparently was a satisfactory arrangement prior to the vote, tolerated by officials, politicians, churches, drinkers and non-drinkers alike, now seems to have become more indecent and more illegal. As a result, the future of respectable public drinking in Columbus is in for a prolonged period of control and reprisal.

When the orgasm of righteousness wears off and maturity and intelligence creep out of hiding once more, with glass in hand instead of a bottle in a brown paper bag, it will be time enough for another referendum. The next time it might be a good idea for the citizens of Columbus to return to the basic issue of prohibition: wet against dry for better or worse. In a contest like that, the issue would be clearly defined and the lines would be drawn. It would be harder for the politicians to pussyfoot and the right-living teetotalers might have to reinstate some old-fashioned moon shiners and bootleggers for special interest support.