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EDITORIAL

## ADMISSIONS, CROWDING FAST.

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**T**IME was, and that not so long ago, when the motto “Laissez-faire!” (Hands off!) was the roll of the drum to the tune of which the baronial industries of the land loved to assert their rights divine to treat the working people as they pleased. They either knew better but suppressed their knowledge; or they did not know the historic, the political, aye, the revolutionary genesis of the motto, and used it as a term with which to conjure submission to their rule. To utter the motto “Laissez-faire!” seemed to them all-sufficient to justify their acts as sacred, their policy as the only one approved by time, and to silence objection. A leader in this view of the term has ever been the New York *Evening Post*; a striking illustration of the *Evening Post*’s application of the term was furnished by that paper’s attitude at the time of the New Jersey railroad strikes in 1887. New Jersey seemed to have been too slow, in the opinion of the railroad barons, in calling out the militia. The *Evening Post* was of the opinion that “the time had come for our industrial barons to protect their realms in the same manner as the feudal barons protected theirs”; and, seeing that there was question of the New Jersey Legislature abolishing the blot of the Pinkertons, the *Evening Post* bluntly proclaimed in its issue of January 25, 1887:

“The occasion for the services of such men as the Pinkertons will soon be tenfold greater than it is now. . . . The country will be filled with mercenaries made up, as the armies of ancient Rome largely were, with men excluded by custom or circumstances from peaceful avocations, **non-Union men**, who adopt fighting as a means of livelihood. There will be enough for them to do, and pay and rations will not be wanting when the Legislature attempts to abolish Pinkerton’s men.”—All in the name of “Laissez-faire!”

Such was the extreme position of American capitalist baronies, and such it continued to be in substance until the 10th instant. On that date the signal for a

turn about was given. Significant enough the signal was given by the very *Evening Post*; and still more significant is the nature of the argument that backs the signal. The *Evening Post* suddenly recollects the revolutionary genesis of the term “Laissez-faire”; it makes the admission that “Laissez-faire” was a motto urged against “Privilege”—that it was revolutionary.

And so it was. The slogan “Laissez-faire!” was the precursor of the Declaration of the Rights of Man by the French Revolution. The slogan was uttered by a bourgeois, and it was the first tocsin of the bourgeois revolution, aimed against the then enthroned feudal despotism. When that revolution was accomplished the despotism of Capital mounted the throne which Feudal despotism had previously occupied. From that instant, the lips of the bourgeois were the last upon which the slogan fitted. The continuance of its use by them, especially against the next, the Socialist revolution of the Working Class, was but a usurpation, a bit of hypocrisy.

The admission of the revolutionary genesis of the term “Laissez-faire” on the part of the *Evening Post* ranks with the admission implied by the then Secretary of Treasury Shaw, when last month he urged a bunch of capitalists at a banquet in Washington to pray to God to “save us” from our prosperity; and it ranks with the admission made shortly after by the *New York Sun* on the 28th of last December that “there is a greater unrest and a greater uneasiness in the air than there was before Sumter was fired on.” It is an admission tantamount to acknowledging that the Capitalist Class is the modern occupier of the throne against whom the slogan “Laissez-faire!” was intonated; it is an admission that the modern incumbent of that throne represents nothing but “Privilege”; it is an admission that the modern incumbent will have to fall back upon the methods of its predecessor, such methods as the *Evening Post* of January 25, 1887, suggested;—it is an admission that Capitalism now feels itself so cornered that it drops the mask of “Principle” hitherto held before its face, and steps forth, or rather stands at bay, with nothing but its fangs to rely upon.

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