

driving-wheel brakes," etc. The measure provides that from and after the first day of January, 1898, it shall be unlawful for any common carrier engaged in interstate commerce by railroad to use on its line any locomotive engine in moving interstate traffic not equipped with a power driving-wheel brake and appliances for operating the train-brake system, or to run any train in such traffic after said date that has not a sufficient number of cars in it so equipped with power or train brakes that the engineer on the locomotive drawing such train can control its speed without requiring brakemen to use the common hand brake for that purpose. Also that it shall be unlawful for any such common carrier to haul or permit to be hauled or used on its line any car used in moving interstate traffic not equipped with couplers coupling automatically by impact, and which can be uncoupled without the necessity of men going between the ends of the cars.

The remainder of the act is supplementary to the foregoing, engaging in details and specifications relating thereto and providing penalties for infractions thereof. It also provides that any employee of a common carrier who is injured by any locomotive, car or train in use contrary to the provisions of the act shall not be deemed thereby to have assumed the risk thereby occasioned, even though he continue in such employment after acquiring such knowledge—meaning that his claim for damages is not in any way impaired because of the company's non-compliance with the law and his knowledge that such is the case. The act was approved March 2, 1898.

### A BLOW AT LABOR UNIONS.

The labor organizations of the country have been receiving extremely unsympathetic treatment at the hands of the courts during a week or two past. Federal judges in Ohio and Michigan, and still more recently in Louisiana, have handed down decisions which are in effect almost revolutionary; in the first two cases they have the effect practically to deny to railroad employees the right to strike, and in the third case, the decision is that general strikes where they interfere with the freedom of commerce are unlawful and the leaders are liable to punishment. The foundation for this latter judgment is that not only was the commerce of New Orleans for a time paralyzed by the action of the united labor organizations during the recent strike, but interstate commerce also was made to suffer, and hence all that conspires to interfere with or hinder any of the operations of business, which is so intimately associated with, and so vital to, the welfare of society, must be deemed unlawful.

It will be seen at a glance how tremendously far-reaching this ruling, if it shall be sustained, will be. The right of one or any number of working men to cease work rather than submit to what they may deem an injustice has never before been questioned. In the past they have been lightly treated even when guilty of overt acts against

the person and property of those whom they considered their oppressors. Courts and juries have given due weight to the provocation in the case, and have generally held that some part of the blame rested upon the capitalist's side. It would have been deemed absurd that men might not peaceably forsake their work if they preferred idleness to labor under unpleasant conditions, without rendering themselves liable to punishment. Yet this is exactly what the ruling of Judge Billings of New Orleans means, if it means anything at all.

A singular feature of the case is that the decision rests apparently upon the anti-trust law. Every working man and every friend of the working man will hope that such a coincidence may have really happened. There is much in that law that the courts as yet have not been very keen to enforce. We think it can be shown that where the workingmen violate one of its conditions the capitalists violate many. There are two sides to this business of lock-outs and strikes and the suspension of commerce, and the responsibility for the evils that ever and anon carry ruin to a community's business is not always on the side of the men who carry their dinner in a bucket when they leave home in the morning. The News has seen fit on many occasions to criticize the operations and methods of trades unions and labor organizations. Some of their domineering and impudence we do not and cannot approve of. At the same time we are the laboring man's friend, and believe that he should be treated as a human being, not as a chattel, and that he has rights as inalienable as has his employer. Furthermore, we are opposed to the combinations of capital to oppress and grind down labor, and to lay all markets under tribute; and we believe much of the trouble between the two elements of industrial prosperity has been due to this disposition. If at last the anti-trust law is going to be treated as a live measure, let all stand aside and give its enforcement a fair field. If united workingmen may not go out on strike without violating its provisions, how about those whose conduct compels such a course in ordinary respect to sent? There would seem to be as much peril to business in the tyranny of a heartless trust as in the rule of a disordered proletariat.

### THE FIRST AMBASSADOR.

As a nation we progress variously, but in no respect have we exhibited a greater degree of advancement than in our intercourse with foreign powers. It was once the case that what the United States did or desired to be done in a diplomatic way was looked upon by those who wear crowns and high-sounding titles as simply the act or expression of an organized mob too strong to be overcome and too brave to submit to insult, but yet possessing nothing of the grandeur that should characterize a nation. They all think differently now, and in no respect is this difference more marked than in the recognition given by Great Britain to the recent act of Congress authorizing the

President to appoint an ambassador to any nation that shall so recognize us or propose to do so.

A few days ago her majesty's government with all due formality raised Sir Julian Pauncefote from the rank of envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary to the lofty station of ambassador, and Germany, France, Russia and Austria will probably follow suit in a short time. In recognition of the act of Victoria's cabinet President Cleveland yesterday sent to the Senate the name of Thomas F. Bayard of Delaware to be ambassador to Great Britain, thus establishing comity upon a new and higher basis than it has ever occupied before. In this connection it may be said that the appointment of Mr. Bayard is in line with the other diplomatic assignments of President Cleveland, first-class and difficult to have been improved upon.

The title is about all there is of it so far as our government is concerned, but not so abroad. The enactment by Congress was because our representatives at foreign courts have had to yield precedence in official station and social matters to the agents of other countries who held the commission of ambassador, and it mattered not how small or insignificant such nations were; our representatives had to take a back seat, figuratively speaking, and this was always embarrassing, sometimes humiliating, and never in accord with the rule of proportion. All that is over now, and henceforth our agent at the court of St. James will occupy as lofty and conspicuous a position as that of any other nation.

Although the Constitution provides that the President "shall appoint ambassadors," etc., we think the term in that connection is generic, and while it comes down to us that the President in the early days appointed such officers without authority of Congress, it is still more or less apocryphal. The functions and powers of the government were not as distinctly defined soon after the divorcement from England and English customs as they are today, and it may be that the executive occasionally assumed royal prerogatives unconsciously, pronouncing them "ambassadors" when in reality they were simply ministers. Certainly no one in recent times has done so with the exception of President Cleveland, and, as above noted, in doing it he has done well.

### HONORS LONG DELAYED.

The announcement comes that the pope intends to beatify Joan of Arc, and this means that she may soon thereafter be enrolled among the Catholic saints, as beatification is but the precursor of canonization. A good many people know something of the history of that unfortunate heroine, but few there are who know all or any considerable part of it. A girl in whom a strange blending of romance, heroism and spiritualism existed, believed at the age of 13 that she received visits from the angels and not, as we understand such visitations to be, few and far between, but frequently. When 17 years old, in 1428, she believed herself inspired to deliver France