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One of the most unusual strikes in history, inconveniencing a big manufacturing plant in Hoboken, has been settled. Sheriff Kinhead was not called in.

Two hundred workmen who had stubbornly refused to return to work yielded to the persuasiveness of a young woman, and are now back on the job, toiling industriously.

The two hundred workmen are spiders. It is their function in the plant of Keuffel & Esser Co. to spin the cobwebs which are used as cross hairs in surveying instruments to mark the exact center of the object lens.

A few days ago the spider workmen refused to produce. Yesterday, when the spiders were observed by an Evening Mail representative, they were spinning at full speed.

Just Tickled Their Toes.

Mary Piper, the forewoman, was asked for the secret to her success.

"I just tickled their toes and tapped their legs," declared Mary, and they finally went back. We worried for a while though, I can tell you."

Thousands of yards of spider web are used yearly by this company, so a general strike by the spider staff is really a serious matter.

The Only Perfect Thread.

Spider web is the only satisfactory material yet discovered for the cross hairs of surveying instruments. Almost invisible as this thread is to the naked eye, it is brought up in the powerful lenses to the size of a man's thumb, so all defects, if there should be any, would be magnified to such a degree that the web would be useless.

But spider webs of this particular variety are without defects. Human hair has been tried, but when magnified it has the apparent dimensions of a rough hewn lamp post. Moreover, it is transparent, and cross hairs

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A Creature of Moods.

The workmen spiders begin work each year the first or second week in August, spinning continuously — if they can be coaxed over their despondent spells — until about the middle of September.

It is a fact not widely known that

spiders have fits of depression often reaching melancholia, and the little creatures must be given cheerful surroundings. During these spells the spiders must be humored.

A spider in the first stages of melancholia is distinguished by the brutal way it cuffs its offspring about. For spiders, like all other artists, are temperamental.

Mary Piper, with three assistants, has charge of the spider department. All of them are experts in the art of coaxing the spiders to produce and past masters of tactfulness. None but the most genial girls in the factory are selected for this work. Not all girls, however, desire to handle the squirming little insects.

She Likes Spiders and Mice.

Mary Piper demonstrated her fearlessness by letting a spider crawl over her hand. In this respect she is unlike most girls. When asked if the spiders weren't repulsive to her, Mary laughed.

"Oh, I like spiders," she said, "and I love mice."

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"Coaxing the spiders really means irritating them. They are placed on a girl's hand and tickled. When sufficiently angry, the spider leaps savagely towards the ground, leaving an end of its thread behind. This end is attached to the whirling frame, and as the spider struggles frantically to reach the ground its thread, unraveling, is wound upon the frame.

The factory maintains a large room where the spiders are kept. They are fed and housed in comfortable quarters entirely at the company's expense. Fat flies are the chief article of diet.

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[Photo of Mary Piper (actually Pfeiffer) holding a spider web spinning frame at the K&E factory in Hoboken]

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