

A Woman's Chance of Marriage.

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PERHAPS there is nothing that is more annoying to the average woman who wishes to marry a particular man than to see him carried off by some other woman — unless not getting married at all be more annoying to a woman than the failure to marry the man she fancies.

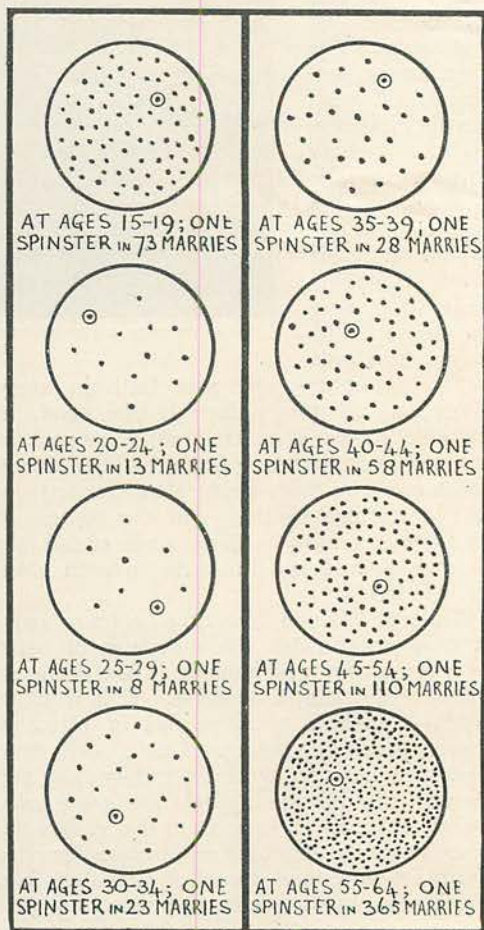
No one can doubt that there are many most pleasant spinsters, no longer in the first bloom of youth, who would make excellent wives, and one has often been surprised to see such women left unmarried, while other women, in no respect superior to these pleasant spinsters, are often married.

This and other things I have noticed cause me to think there has been, and still is, a great misdirection of energy on the part of spinsters who wish to marry. While there is much that is unpalatable to the average man in women who are too obviously bent on marriage, there is surely no reason why a thoroughly nice woman who prefers matrimony to a single life should not, within the limits of good taste and of discretion, direct her attractiveness into the channel that is the most likely to aid her in attaining her desire; but this is seldom done, or, if done sometimes by chance or by intuition, this right direction, by a woman, of her endeavour to marry, is not carried out with any clear idea as to who is the most likely man to marry her. I mean, when I say the most likely man, that the average woman has absolutely no knowledge of the fact that, according to her age and her civil condition (*i.e.*, spinster or widow), this or that group of men, and the man's civil condition (*i.e.*, bachelor or widower), may be pointed to as the group who supply the best chance of success to the woman wishing to marry, while other groups of men may be shown to her with whom her chance of marriage is practically nil.

For example, a bachelor aged 25—34 is worth to a woman—as a marrying man—fifty young bachelors at ages 15—19, for the chance of the older man marrying within one year is fifty times as great as the chance of one of the younger men. This is an extreme case, purposely chosen to illustrate my words; but a bachelor aged 25—34 is worth three times as much to a woman—as a marrying man—as a bachelor aged 35—44. This is the sort of information that I have to impart to unmarried women, and it is worth noting.

Recognising this waste of misdirected

endeavour of spinsters, and wishing to see fewer mature spinsters than one does see, I have applied myself to the task of finding out a lot of curious and, I hope, valuable facts as to a woman's chance of marriage, according to her age and her civil condition. The task has not been an easy one, for, with the exception of a scanty investigation of this interesting subject about thirty years ago by an official in the office of the Registrar-General (and whose facts are now, of course, out of date), no one has given any attention to a matter that is really very important—especially to women who wish to marry. So I have had to make an entirely independent investigation, based on the most recent raw material I could find in the official records.



No. 1.—A Spinster's chance of marriage [within the year] at eight groups of ages from 15 to 64. The best chance is at ages 25—29, when one spinster marries [within the year] out of every eight spinsters aged 25—29.

First, let me direct attention to Diagram No. 1. This shows the varying chances of marriage possessed by spinsters of the ages mentioned, from ages 15—19 to ages 55—64. We see that a spinster's best chance of marriage is at ages 25—29, for then one spinster of every eight spinsters, of these ages, marries within one year. The competition for the tiny wedding-ring which, in each of these eight groups of spinsters, encircles the black dot that represents the one spinster who marries in each group, becomes greater as age advances, until at ages 55—64 only one spinster marries in every 365 spinsters of these ages; only one of the dots in our last group of No. 1 is surrounded by the tiny ring, the 364 other dots (or spinsters) being left unmarried. I may say that at ages 65 and upwards, the wedding-ring is secured by only one spinster in 3,030 spinsters aged 65 and upwards—the chance of marriage has dropped to its lowest point.

The practical hint that is given to spinsters by Diagram No. 1 is, "Make hay while the sun shines," *i.e.*, at ages 20—29; don't frivel with men not likely to marry, for these are the years when a spinster's chance of marriage is highest. Later, I shall tell spinsters which men *are* likely to marry them at these and other ages.

Widows are formidable rivals of spinsters. For example, compare the following rates of re-marriage of widows with those of spinsters just given in No. 1:—

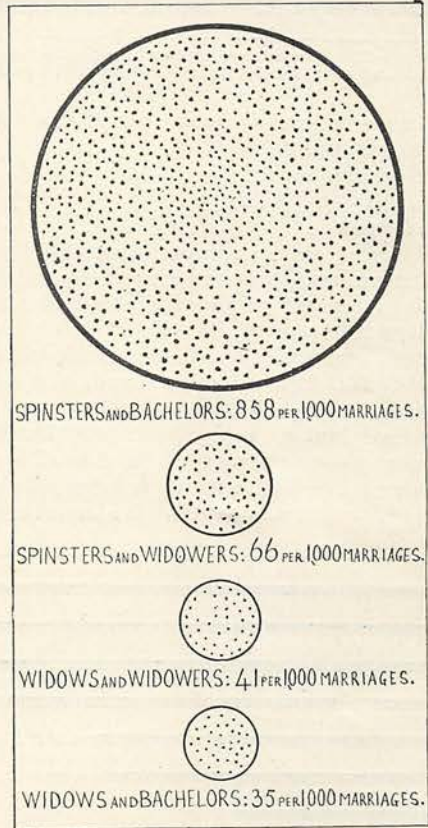
Age.	One Widow re-marries in every	One Spinster marries in every
15—19	22 widows.	73 spinsters.
20—24	8 "	13 "
25—34	10 "	{ 25—29 8 "
		{ 30—34 23 "
35—44	23 "	{ 35—39 28 "
		{ 40—44 58 "
45—54	68 "	110 "
55—64	224 "	365 "

This little statement shows that, throughout life, a widow's chance of re-marrying is greater than a spinster's chance of marrying, for, although at ages 25—29 a spinster's chance is slightly better than a widow's chance at age 25—34, yet, as at ages 30—34 a spinster's chance is much less than a widow's chance at ages 25—34, the disadvantage for ages 25—34 is distinctly on the side of the spinster.

In No. 2 we see how marriages are made up of the four pairs of men and women who marry. Thus:—

	In every 1,000 marriages.
Spinsters and Bachelors	858
Spinsters and Widowers	66
Widows and Widowers	41
Widows and Bachelors	35
Total	1,000

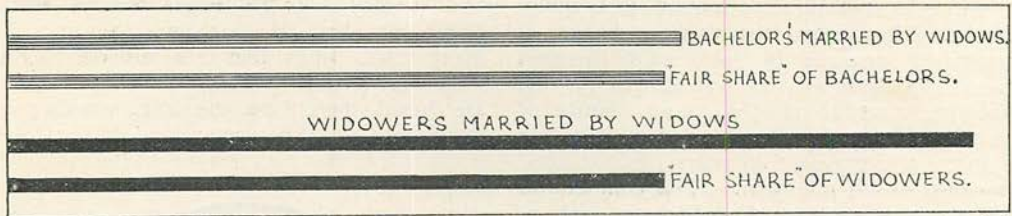
You may say: "Spinsters are all right, then; for they take 924 wedding-rings in every 1,000 rings that are put on to the fingers of brides." True, but these results are based merely on the total number of marriages that take place; they do not take



No. 2.—The four groups of men and women who marry, showing the number of marriages in each group, to every 1,000 marriages which occur.

into the account the *proportion* of spinsters who marry to the total number of spinsters at each age in the country (as was done in No. 1), nor do they show the *proportion* of widows who re-marry, to the total number of widows, at each age, in the country, as was done in the little comparative statement as to widows' and spinsters' chances just given. There are many more spinsters than widows, and thus, of course, many more spinsters marry; but if you take 100 widows of any age and 100 spinsters of the same age, the widows will (on re-marriage) take more wedding-rings than the spinsters.

To illustrate this point I have prepared No. 3, which shows the encroachment of the widow, who takes more than her "fair share"



No. 3.—The Encroachment of the Widow on the preserves of the Spinster. Widows, on re-marriage, take more than their "fair share" of both Bachelors and Widowers. [Without taking into the account the previous marriage, or marriages, of a widow.]

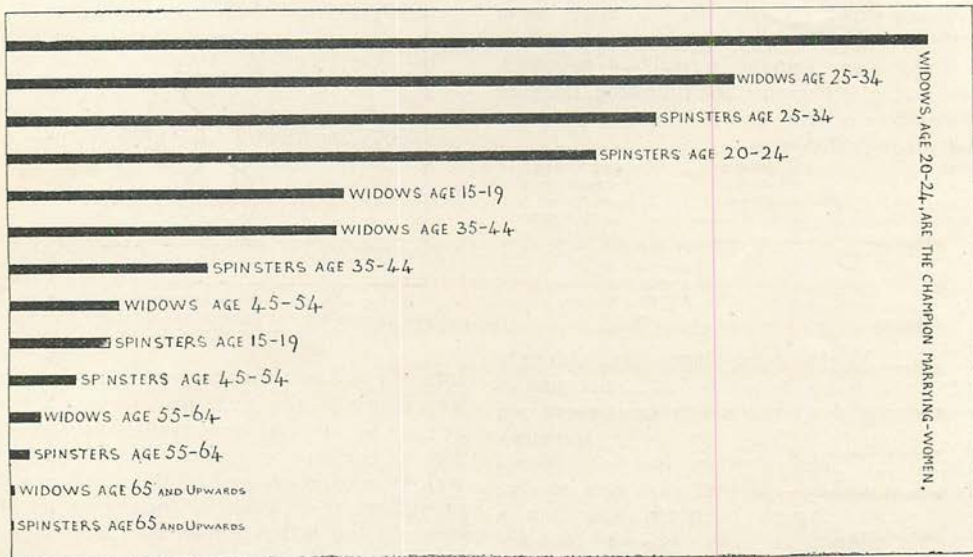
of men—without including her previous husband or husbands.

Here are the facts :—

	<i>Actual</i>	<i>"Fair</i>
	<i>No.</i>	<i>Share."</i>
Bachelors taken by Widows ...	1,025	1,000
Widowers " " ...	1,467	1,000

Thus, for every 1,000 bachelors who should fall to widows, 1,025 are married by widows ; and as regards widowers, instead of 1,000, widows take 1,467 ! This is hardly fair to the spinster, especially as all these widows have already had at least one husband, who is not included in the above results, and the practical hint given to spinsters by Diagram No. 3 is—be wary of the widow with the downcast eye, if the man you fancy gets into her society. I may say that the largest excess

is—19 to 65 and upwards. A spinster, or a widow—who knows her own age—has merely to look in No. 4 for the black line at the end of which is written her age, and she will see how she stands as compared with other women who are her rivals in matrimony. I regret to have to say that widows take the first two places in No. 4, and that, *in proportion to the number of widows in this country, aged 20—24*, these young widows are the champion marrying women. However, spinsters need not feel discouraged, for, luckily for them, there are not nearly so many of these dangerous widows as there are spinsters. I do not give the actual numerical equivalents of the black lines in No. 4, as the



No. 4.—The respective chances of marriage of women, arranged in regular order.

over their fair share of *bachelors* is taken by widows aged 20—24, and of *widowers*, by widows aged 20—24 and 25—34. Therefore, widows aged 20—34 are more dangerous rivals to spinsters than widows at other ages.

Diagram No. 4 gives a bird's-eye view of the respective chances of women (spinsters and widows, separately) at various ages from

lines themselves speak plainly enough as regards the comparisons they illustrate.

In No. 5 we have the respective values of widowers as compared with bachelors—as marrying men. This is a rather useful little statement, and it shows that, at all ages, the chance of a widower re-marrying is greater than that of a bachelor marrying. For con-

AT AGES 20-24,	TEN WIDOWERS ARE WORTH	14	BACHELORS.
" 25-34,	" " " "	16	" "
" 35-44,	" " " "	30	" "
" 45-54,	" " " "	45	" "
" 55-64,	" " " "	58	" "
" 65 AND UP,	" " " "	45	" "

No. 5.—The respective values of Widowers and of Bachelors, as marrying men, at the ages stated above. The value of the widower is always greater than that of the bachelor, as a marrying man.

venience I have, at each group of ages in No. 5, given the value, in bachelors, of ten widowers. For example, at ages 35—44, ten widowers are worth thirty bachelors, so that if a woman who wishes to marry have the opportunity of attracting three bachelors and one widower, all of ages 35—44, she had better go for the widower, as his chance of marrying is worth the combined chances of all the three bachelors. This is a very useful hint to women, and No. 5 supplies other hints.

In No. 6 we have a statement of the relative values of widowers—as marrying men—in accordance with the age of the widower. The lowest value of a widower is at ages 65 and upwards, and this value is taken as the unit by which to measure the values of widowers at all younger ages. Thus, a widower aged 25—34 is worth 38 widowers aged 65 and upwards, and he is worth rather

WIDOWER AT AGES 20-24 IS WORTH	24	WIDOWERS AT AGES 65 AND UPWARDS
" " 25-34	38	" " 65
" " 35-44	25	" " 65
" " 45-54	12	" " 65
" " 55-64	5	" " 65

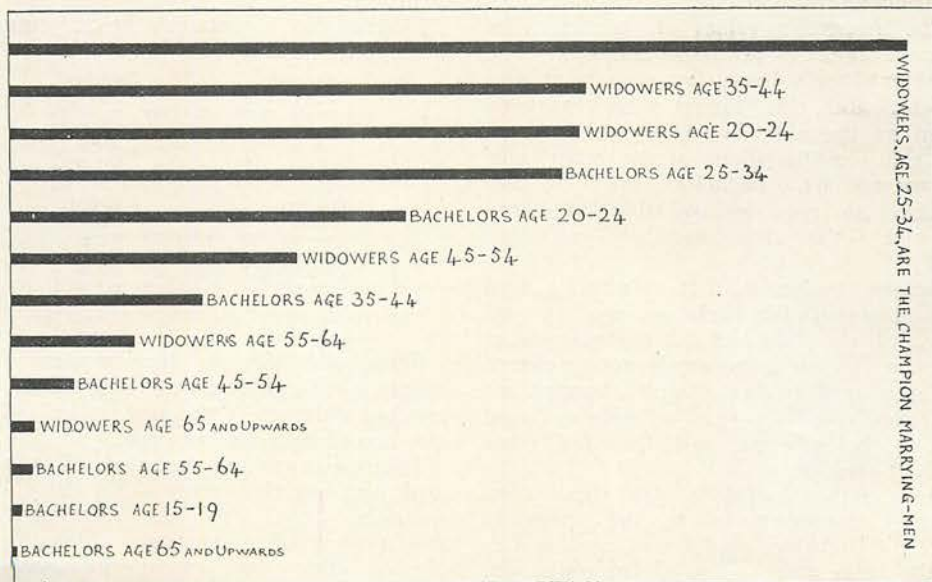
No. 6.—The relative values of Widowers, as marrying men, at the ages stated above.

more than three widowers aged 45—54 (38 to 12). Similarly, a widower aged 35—44 is worth rather over two widowers aged 45—54; and so on.

These essentially practical hints to women who wish to marry will, I hope, be recognised by women and acted on. They are put as clearly and as practically as possible, and intellects which can master the mysteries of paper dress-patterns and the intricacies of a cookery-book will not, I feel sure, fail to follow the gist of the somewhat novel information I am now imparting to the unmarried women of this country.

One of the most valuable pieces of infor-

mation now given is that contained in Diagram No. 7. Here we have set out, in the order of value, the respective values of widowers and of bachelors—as marrying men. The men who marry most, in proportion to the number of them in this country, are widowers aged 25—34; there are not, of course, *so many* widowers aged 25—34 as



No. 7.—A Practical Guide to women contemplating Marriage.

there are men in some of the other groups, but when you do come across one of these widowers aged 25—34, you may feel sure that he belongs to the group of men that are the best marrying men there are. He is worth, as a marrying man, a good deal more than a bachelor aged 25—34. See in No. 7 the much shorter black line that relates to bachelors aged 25—34.

Notice, also, that the first three places in No. 7 are taken by widowers. These three leading groups, which comprise widowers aged 20—44, show that these men are men who should not be neglected by women who wish to marry in favour of such comparatively worthless men (*i.e.*, worthless as marrying men) as bachelors at ages 20—24, 35—44, 45—54, etc. Not one of these bachelors is nearly so valuable as a widower who is included by the first three black lines in No. 7; there are, of course, many

the young ones who are really almost worthless (as marrying men), may not infrequently mislead the young woman who wishes to marry, owing to the encouragement by the bachelor of an entirely fallacious opinion in the woman's mind as regards his own value. Table No. 8 will be useful to women as a corrective for this little fallacy. Many women lose their chance of marriage during the very best period of their lives, owing to a mistaken direction of their energies towards men who are practically of very small value as possible husbands. This may be pleasant, but it is certainly foolish, if the woman really wish to marry. (I speak without prejudice, for I am married.)

If a woman let her best years go by, in frivolling with men who are of small value as possible husbands, she one day realizes the fact that she wishes to marry—and finds it difficult. Well, I want to help these women.

|	BACHELOR AT AGES 20-24	IS WORTH	36	BACHELORS AT AGES 15-19.
|	" " 25-34	"	50	" " 15-19.
|	" " 35-44	"	17	" " 15-19.
|	" " 45-54	"	6	" " 15-19.
|	" " 55-64	"	2	" " 15-19.

No. 8.—The relative values of Bachelors, as marrying men, at the ages stated above.

more bachelors of these ages than there are widowers; but, man for man, the widower is a much better "chance" than the bachelor.

The respective values of bachelors, of different ages, is given in No. 8. The bachelor whose value is lowest is he at ages 15—19, and this lowest value has been taken as the unit by which to measure the value of bachelors at the other ages up to age 64. (Bachelors aged 65 and upwards are even less valuable—as marrying men—than those aged 15—19. See No. 7.)

We see, in No. 8, that a bachelor aged 25—34 is worth fifty bachelors aged 15—19, as regards the chance of his marrying within the year. And it is worth noting that a bachelor aged 35—44 is worth nearly three bachelors aged 45—54, a bachelor aged 45—54 being worth just three of those aged 55—64, etc.

It is rather useful to give these comparative statements as to the respective values of bachelors at different ages, and as to the respective values of bachelors and widowers, etc.; for some bachelors, especially

If their time has gone for getting any man they fancied, the best thing they can do is to find out who are the most likely men to marry them *now*.

Diagram No. 9 contains a broad summary of the following facts:—

<i>Spinsters</i>				<i>Bachelors</i>			
<i>Aged</i>				<i>Aged</i>			
21—24	most	often	marry	21—24			
25—29	"	"	"	25—29			
30—34	"	"	"	30—34			
35—39	"	"	"	35—39			
AND							
<i>Spinsters</i>				<i>Widowers</i>			
<i>Aged</i>				<i>Aged</i>			
40—44	most	often	marry	40—44			
45—49	"	"	"	50—54			
50—54	"	"	"	55—59			
55—59	"	"	"	60—64			
60—64	"	"	"	65—69			
65—69	"	"	"	70—74			
70—74	"	"	"	75—79			

Thus, after age 39, the spinster's best chance is with widowers, and she will do well to select widowers of the ages stated, which vary according to her own age.

Even widowers may be glad of a practical hint on this score—for they, like spinsters, frivol to the detriment of their chance of re-marriage, although not to so great an extent as spinsters frivol.

Here is a statement for widows :—

<i>Widows</i>			<i>Bachelors</i>
<i>Aged</i>			<i>Aged</i>
21—24	most	frequently	21—24
25—29	"	"	25—29
30—34	"	"	30—34
35—39	"	"	30—34
		AND	
<i>Widows</i>			<i>Widowers</i>
<i>Aged</i>			<i>Aged</i>
40—44	most	frequently	40—44
45—49	"	"	45—49
50—54	"	"	50—54
55—59	"	"	55—59
60—64	"	"	60—64
65—69	"	"	65—69
70—74	"	"	65—69

As with spinsters after age 39, so also with widows, the best men to go for are widowers.

The foregoing statements show those marriages which *most often* occur. But, as this is a very valuable part of my subject, I have also investigated the matter as to who are the most likely men for women to marry, based on the number of such men in the population—a somewhat different matter from that just discussed, and which is perhaps more valuable.

By this method, I find that :—

Spinsters at ages 15—44 have the best chance with Bachelors.

Spinsters at ages 45 and upwards have the best chance with Widowers.

AND

Widows at ages 15—34 have the best chance with Bachelors.

Widows at ages 35 and upwards have the best chance with Widowers.

And, for each group of ages, we get the following very interesting and valuable results, which show, for every 100 spinsters who marry at each age, and for every 100 widows who marry at each age, the numbers who marry bachelors and widowers, respectively :—

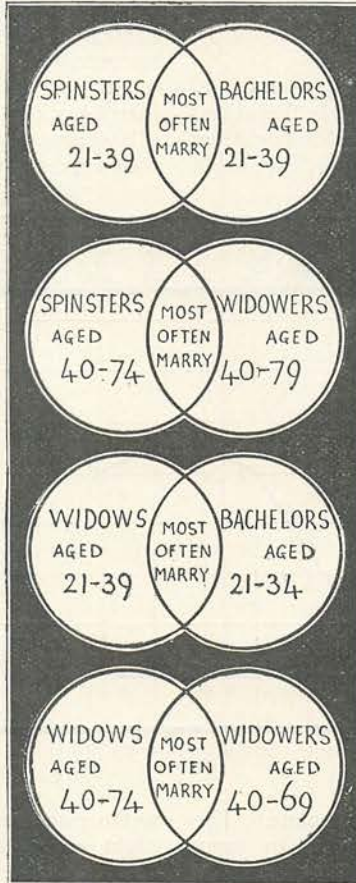
Age of Woman.	Spinsters marry bachelors.	Spinsters marry widowers.	Total.	Widows marry bachelors.	Widows marry widowers.	Total.
15—19	99	1	100	86	14	100
20—24	97	3	100	85	15	100
25—34	91	9	100	71	29	100
35—44	54	44	100	45	55	100
45—54	27	73	100	22	78	100
55—64	22	78	100	10	90	100
65 & up	16	84	100	10	90	100

This tells spinsters that from ages 15—34 their best chance, by far, is to marry bachelors; at ages 35—44 their chance with bachelors is still better than with widowers; but at ages 45 and upwards, the best chance of the spinster is to marry a widower. And for widows, their chance at ages 15—34 is by far the best with bachelors; after age 34, with widowers.

These results are based not merely on the number of marriages which actually occur—as in No. 9—but also upon the respective numbers of spinsters, widows, bachelors, and widowers in the population at each group of age. And, therefore, these results are more accurate than those in No. 9, although there is not very much difference between the two. These results give to spinsters an extension of five years in which to marry bachelors (*i.e.*, from age 39 to age 44), and they give to widows five years less in which to marry bachelors (*i.e.*, from age 39 to age 34).

Women who wish to marry, and especially spinsters, may certainly help themselves to attain their wish by acting on some of the hints I have given as to their chances of marriage at various ages, and to various men. To encourage these unmarried women still more, I have found out with approximate accuracy the number of spinsters, widows, bachelors, and widowers, at each group of ages, who are in this country at the

present time, 1898. I think that spinsters will be agreeably surprised to find that there are many more marriageable men than they imagine. The popular idea that there are three women to every man is wholly fallacious, and when we deduct all the married men and women now in England and Wales (the facts are not available for Scotland or for Ireland) we get the following rather



No. 9.—Affinities between Spinsters and Bachelors, Spinsters and Widowers, Widows and Bachelors, Widows and Widowers—according to the age of the persons who marry. [For more details, see text.]

interesting results for persons aged 20 and upwards :—

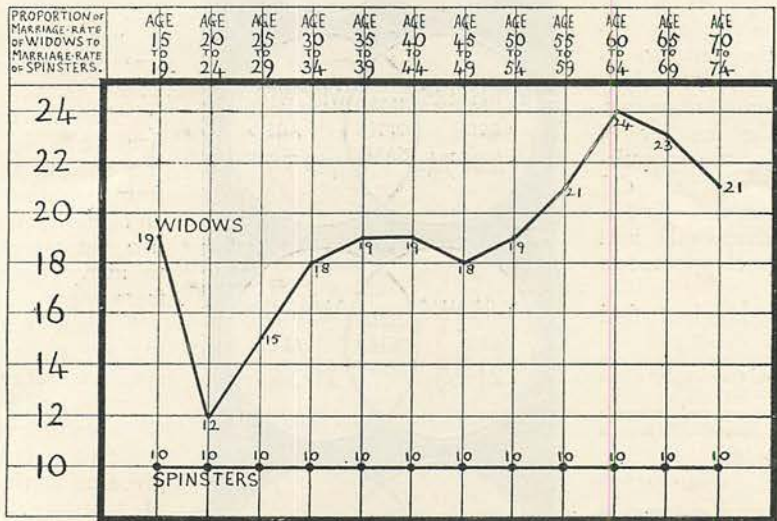
Number of spinsters, bachelors, widows, and widowers in England and Wales in 1898, at ages 20 and upwards.		Number of females to every 1,000 males of the groups in the left-hand column.	
Spinsters	2,542,100	...	1,075
Bachelors	2,364,100	...	1,000
Excess of Spinsters ...	178,000		
<hr/>			
Widows	1,218,100	...	2,305
Widowers	528,400	...	1,000
Excess of Widows ...	689,700		
<hr/>			
Spinsters and Widows ...	3,760,200	...	1,300
Bachelors and Widowers...	2,892,500	...	1,000
Excess of Spinsters and Widows ... }	867,700		

We see that as regards spinsters and bachelors, at ages 20 and upwards, the excess of spinsters is only 75 in every 1,000 bachelors—by no means a disquieting excess of

with ages 15—19, so as to include some younger women and men than are included by the summary just given :—

At ages	There are marriageable women, i.e., Spinsters and Widows, as below.	There are marriageable men, i.e., Bachelors and Widowers, as below.	No. of marriageable women to every 1,000 marriageable men.	
			Women.	Men.
15—19 ...	1,576,400	1,523,600	995	1,000
20—24 ...	1,066,500	1,029,700	978	1,000
25—34 ...	858,000	800,800	1,072	1,000
35—44 ...	443,400	317,600	1,396	1,000
45—54 ...	417,600	223,700	1,866	1,000
55—64 ...	419,200	191,500	2,142	1,000
65 & up...	564,500	269,200	2,097	1,000

We see that at the first two age-groups, 15—19 and 20—24, there are actually *more* bachelors and widowers than there are spinsters and widows. At age-group, 25—34, the excess of marriageable women over marriageable men commences with an excess of seventy-two in every 1,000 bachelors and widowers. This is only an excess of women



No. 10.—The Great Superiority of the Widow over the Spinster, as a marrying woman, in the years 1870—1872.

spinsters for spinsters to contemplate. The widows out-number the widowers by more than 2 to 1; there are 230 widows to every 100 widowers, and this excess of widows, coupled with the superior re-marriage rates of widows over spinsters (to which I have already directed the attention of spinsters), does tend to work against the interests of spinsters who wish to marry.

It is rather interesting to split up the excess of marriageable women over marriageable men, just shown, into the various age-groups, so that marriageable women may see how they stand at each group of age, in regard to the number of men who are available as possible husbands. I will begin

to the extent of seven per 100 men, and this slight excess of marriageable women is in respect of the ages 25—34, so that at a spinster's best years for her chance of marriage (ages 20—29, see Diagram No. 1), we may say that there are practically as many, or more, marriageable men as there are women.

At the next age-group, 35—44, a lot of widows enter the field, and this fact, combined with the excess of spinsters over bachelors at ages 35—44 (305,000 spinsters, 256,000 bachelors; excess of spinsters, 49,000), causes the number of marriageable women at these ages to exceed the number of marriageable men to the extent of nearly 40 per 100 men.

At the later ages, 45 and upwards, the excess of women over men increases, but this excess is mainly due to an excess of widows, for, at ages 45 and upwards, there are actually more widows in our population than spinsters; the respective numbers of spinsters and widows, in every 100 marriageable women, being:—

Age.	No. of Spinsters.	No. of Widows.	Total.
20—24	99	1	100
25—34	94	6	100
35—44	69	31	100
45—54	42	58	100
55—64	26	74	100
65 & up.	16	84	100

[NOTE.—At ages 20—24 there are rather more than 99 spinsters to 1 widow; but, to avoid fractions, I have stated the results as above.]

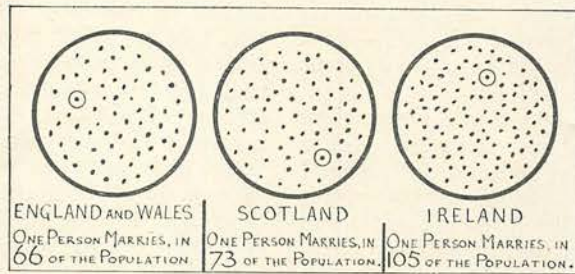
We see that, at ages 45 and upwards, the widows are considerably in excess of the spinsters in our population, and at these later ages, 45 and upwards, the marriageable men are considerably *in excess of the*

for each group of ages the marriage-rate of widows with the marriage-rate of spinsters, the marriage-rate of widows being represented by the zig-zag line which is always seen above the lower line in No. 10, which represents the marriage-rate of spinsters in the years 1870—1872.

Here is the comparison:—

The marriage-rate of spinsters being taken (for convenience of comparison) at 1870, the marriage-rate of widows was		In the years 1870-72. (See Diagram No. 10.)		On recent facts.	
At	Ages				
15—19	...	19	...	...	33
20—24	...	12	...	...	16
25—29	...	15	...	...	...
30—34	...	18	...	...	11
35—39	...	19	...	...	...
40—44	...	19	...	...	16
45—49	...	18	...	...	...
50—54	...	19	...	...	16
55—59	...	21	...	...	...
60—64	...	24	...	...	16
65—69	...	23	...	...	...
70—74	...	21	...	...	15

Thus, only at ages 15—24 have widows increased the advantage over spinsters which



No. 11.—The superiority of England and Wales—as a marrying-place over Scotland and Ireland; and of Scotland over Ireland.

spinsters, and, but for the large number of widows who are then the formidable rivals of spinsters, the latter would have much less difficulty in getting married than is usually the case with spinsters at these mature ages. This fact, as do many of the others I have pointed out to spinsters, gives emphasis to the adage, "Make hay while the sun shines"; or, in other words, don't frivel with men of small value as possible husbands when you are at the period of life when your chance of marriage is greatest—viz., at ages 20—29.

However, I am glad to be able to state for the encouragement of spinsters that the competition of widows is not so keen now as it was in the years 1870—1872, to which Diagram No. 10 relates. This chart compares

they had nearly thirty years ago; at all the other ages the spinster has succeeded in lessening the great advantage of the widow shown by No. 10, and to an appreciable degree.

Diagram No. 11 contrasts the marriage-rates of the three parts of the United Kingdom, of which England stands highest as a marrying country. The highest marriage-rate in the registration divisions of England is in the County of London. With this last hint to women who wish to marry, I conclude this inquiry into a woman's chance of marriage, expressing the hope that the information now given to spinsters may be of practical value to these ladies, and so I say to them—Fare ye well.