

ENGLISH DEATH-RATES, PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE.

A VALEDICTORY ADDRESS.

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Given before the ROYAL STATISTICAL SOCIETY, June 16th, 1936, the RT. HON. LORD KENNET OF THE DENE, P.C., G.B.E., D.S.O., D.S.C. in the Chair.

IT is not usual for a retiring president to add to the chronicle of events given by the Council. I ask your indulgence for a breach of custom. To others here beside myself the passing of Karl Pearson is something more than the death of a distinguished veteran. I saw him for the first time in 1902, and since then there can hardly have been a day in which some thought of Karl Pearson has not passed through my mind, and there have been long periods when what he did, advised or suggested was a dominant motive. In youth and manhood a word of encouragement from him has made me glow with pride or a rebuke redden with shame. Even now, nearer sixty than fifty, I cannot, emotionally, picture to myself any other man as of his intellectual stature, or hear him spoken of slightly without a childish feeling of rage. Some of us here owe to him an ideal, an unshakeable faith in the possibilities of human reason. If there were all, and more than all, the defects in his intellectual work which critics, far more competent than I, think they have discovered, it would not lessen the debt some of us owe him.

Karl Pearson was not of our Society; his abstention was a great loss to us, and perhaps some loss to him. I do not know that we had anything to teach him, but we had something he might have enjoyed with us; he could hardly have been more respected; had he moved in a wider circle, he might have been more loved.

But, if our Society one day has a comely house of its own, I hope that our successors will imitate a still more famous learned Society paying tribute to a not less famous man: that they will set up in a place of honour a bust of Karl Pearson and inscribe upon it: *Rien ne manque à sa gloire, il manquait à la nôtre.*