A MODERN MIDAS.

In one respect at least, we Socialists have an advantage over other people. The very simplest and rudest ideal that a Socialist can conceive of would bear realisation well; a Socialist could only be disconsolate with much good coming to a Socialist; and there are few creeds or causes of which this could be said. Some have discountered the usual ideals, so to say, and rejected them beforehand. Like the old Scotch lady who declined to sacrifice her pleasures on earth for the chance of sitting on a damp cloud and singing psalms all day for ever in another world; others, like Swedenborg, have gravely (though in his case with much humour also) tried to reason devotes out of the savagery of the Teutonic part of their nature. The very best of us knows, however, that there is little more than the realisation of Socialism in a future state. Modern creeds, on the other hand, with characteristic cowardice, have generally chosen a pessimistic interpretation of Socialism, as if the realisation of ideals by taking care to make them so vague that at no stage of the change could it be said whether they were realised or not.

One religion there is, however, whose ideal as a religion is simple and straightforward enough, and quite capable of realisation, and indeed is often realised; that religion is the religion of money-making.

To put yourself in such a position that no one could for a moment suppose that you need do or were doing anything useful, in, as all we know, the one thing to be striven after according to the Money God; although the pursuit of this ideal is made easier by the pretence of having others, of the damp-cloud and psalm-singing nature. But the realisation of this ideal does not always (it is said) bring satisfaction; to "live the life of a gentleman" has been found irksome to many who have had in earlier days more exciting ways of life than that. Nay, one anecdot was known, which was told me as a fact by a business man of great respectability who was very anxious to show that a "gentleman's" life has unexpected dangers. A man in business in a large Midlands town said my acquaintance (who knew the man), after a long struggle as an agent and broker and what not, carried on with that untiring energy and strength of mind which so distinguishes the English bourgeois (only, by the way, the man was a German)—this man at last grew rich, and "lived like a gentleman"; and then very rich, and lived, I suppose, more like a gentleman. But here came the rub. The man was so bored by the result of his triumph, his realised ideal, or his mind was so strong before that now it became weak, and he found that the only fun in getting out of his position was the pursuit of it. So he proceeded to English industry, and his madness took the form of his thinking that his ideal was still unrealised, and that he was poor and struggling still. He now got little like a "gentleman" that he begrudged his own belly, his own hand, his own teeth, and the like. Here the people who would listen (what with his hangers on) would come to him and say, "So and so, the doctor has ordered you a mutton chop!"; and he would answer, "Well, the doctor had better send it me then; I can't eat it, you know; the case being urgent, and so on." The idea of the "friends" watching him in London to see that that's true; but look here, if you will have a mutton chop we will pay for eating it.

The man believing, as he naturally would, that the money which he had "made" came from nowhere in particular, and that there was no reason why this miracle should not be again, and even continuously exhibited, would say with caution, "Well, what will you give me! and have the command of your mutton chop, your mutton chop, sir; and your mutton chop, sir, also with caution, "Well, let us say £100"; but Midas would turn away with a snort of indignation, and the bidding would rise to £500. "Come, Midas was worth £500. A mutton chop is such expensive work!" and they after some demur would agree, the cheque would be solemnly drawn and signed, and Mr. Midas would fulfill his part of the contract with all the prohity of a British merchant.

The story is a very old one, but a new one here, and the same comedy had to be played with the clothing of this pattern of industry. When he became visibly lozzy, or perhaps a little before, there was a job offered to change his shirt! He would measure and dudge and screw another £100 out of his breeders, as though he had got a treasure to sell them, which they could not bear to lose, and would chuckle over the bogus cheque with complete enjoyment.

I do not know how long was the period of this condition; I unlimably hope a long time, for he must have been a very great nuisance to his hangers on, or keepers, or what not, and they deserve it for not being Socialists. It must be occasions that he was detected and, not being a breadth mixer, and kept him a plenteous house and great state before he reverted to his original thrift and industry.

One is obvious enough not to need repeasting: only perhaps some of our Fabian friends will not so much see Midas in the story, as a judgment called down on the man for neglecting to learn the true tenor of one of its most precious teachings.

I am certain I have just said, and end by asking our readers to look upon this true story, which does not stand by itself, as a type of our sham society, which inflicts so many miseries on others in order to be itself unhappy.

W. M.

YARMOUTH AND FREE SPEECH.

Twelve comrades have already been heavily fined, or the option of a month's imprisonment for obstruction at Yarmouth. On Saturday last, four comrades appeared before the Great Unpaid; a fifth was not present. The comrades did not turn up. The case had been before the week previous and was adjourned so as to enable us to compromise, which we refused to do, as we intend to pay our costs. On Saturday last, Mr. Justice Salvesen, and the public crowded the Court. The number of cases was 38, comprising Socialists, Salvationists, Blue Ribbon, and Church Army. The defendants being called on, the magistrates adjourned for a short time to consider the injustice, not justice, they should pass upon these men and women. Upon their return into Court, the chair-man announced that the G.U. and the four other bodies of society, had carefully considered the cases, and must carry out the law by inflicting a fine which would be, in each case, £10. On the 2nd of December, the defendants decided to go to prison, except in one case, that of a female belonging to the Salvation Army. On the 2nd of January, came the fine, and the time. Time is allowed the defendants to pay the fine; if not paid, distress warrants are to be issued; that failing they go to prison. In all cases defen- dants are allowed to appeal, so that the High Court can settle the matter. The defendants said that they were not willing to pay the fines, that the General Motors had been arrested, and that none of their com- rades, I am pleased to say, have no golds, so they will do the alternative—go to prison. How are we to go on with all the work being done during, as only a few weeks back the fine and costs amounted to £12 10s. 4d. — Saturday last, Is. and Is. was paid. On Saturday, we understand twelve names of the Salvation Army have been taken for holding meetings on a disputed spot. On Sunday next, the Salvation Army is going to hold meetings during the week, and action will be taken against us; I still we shall come out on our feet, and we intend to win. The only gain the sympathy of the workers in Yarmouth.

A. T. S.

DAMN THE PUBLIC, BY ORDER.—The following regulation has been issued to the employees in telegraph offices:—"Telegraphists are not to be given the money, but as near as may be likely to be in friends (by order)." (Here follow the official seal.)

SOCIOLOGICAL LIBRARY IN FLORENCE.—The managing committee appeals to the managers and owners of all bookshops and publishers of Italy to send copies of their publications to the above institution, as the utility of the library is obvious for the furtherance of knowledge of sociology in Italy.

BOSUN ON RALPH—A coffin-shaped house has been opened for railwaymen, at Dover, which the Railway Review calls a "boon"; it is, however, not by any means an unmixed one, as they will have to share its occupants with the general public with whom.

THAT IS THE LAW, MADAM.—"A woman applied to the magistrate at Warrington to get the court to adjourn the other day, seeking a separation order from her husband. He deserted her some months ago, but had now reapplied to the court for her to return, there being a certain sum due to him with her own earnings. The magistrate having elicited that she was married eighteen years ago, said, "Your husband can take everything you have, and that is an end of it."

BRUCE ON RAILWAYMEN.—A coffin-shaped house has been opened for railwaymen, that they should deserve to be clasped with moral-miracles!

THAT IS THE LAW, MADAM.—"A woman applied to the magistrate at Warrington to get the court to adjourn the other day, seeking a separation order from her husband. He deserted her some months ago, but had now reapplied to the court for her to return, there being a certain sum due to him with her own earnings. The magistrate having elicited that she was married eighteen years ago, said, "Your husband can take everything you have, and that is an end of it."

BOSUN ON RALPH—A coffin-shaped house has been opened for railwaymen, at Dover, which the Railway Review calls a "boon"; it is, however, not by any means an unmixed one, as they will have to share its occupants with the general public with whom.

THAT IS THE LAW, MADAM.—"A woman applied to the magistrate at Warrington to get the court to adjourn the other day, seeking a separation order from her husband. He deserted her some months ago, but had now reapplied to the court for her to return, there being a certain sum due to him with her own earnings. The magistrate having elicited that she was married eighteen years ago, said, "Your husband can take everything you have, and that is an end of it."

BOSUN ON RALPH—A coffin-shaped house has been opened for railwaymen, at Dover, which the Railway Review calls a "boon"; it is, however, not by any means an unmixed one, as they will have to share its occupants with the general public with whom.