

may, the words upon our lips, is already gone, as irrevocably gone, as the day of our First Communion, long ago.

These are mere truisms, but we sometimes require to be reminded that certain mere truisms, however plain and commonplace and tiresome, are after all true ; and this is true, that even the longest life is made up of a limited number of moments of time, and that moment after moment, without the slightest break or pause between them, passing away silently and swiftly, and with each moment passes away, used or unused, an opportunity of increasing our security of a happy eternity and of making that eternity happier.

Yes, happy and happier. For it is not merely a question of being lost or saved, though that ought to be enough " to make us work out our salvation with fear and trembling," in real earnest, without a day's break or an hour's delay. But over and above the final saving of our souls, every hour of the year that is just over, every hour of all the past years of our lives, which was not employed in God's grace and according to God's will, is a loss to be deplored, a loss, to a certain extent, irreparable. Yes, every hour once lost is, in a certain true sense, lost utterly and for ever. That individual hour can never be made up for, can never be employed for the purposes for which God gave it to us. Some other hour, indeed, may try to atone for it ; but that other hour has its own work to do, its own merits to gain without seeking to supply for other portions of God's gift. Heroic penance, it is true, can leave languid innocence behind in the race for sanctity ; but with poor sinners like us, with such penance as *we* are likely to perform, has not each day of our lives quite enough to do to atone for itself ? Why should we allow our daily debt to God to fall into such terrible arrears ?

Let us then strive to begin the New Year not only with a pure conscience and a fervent and humble determination to save our soul at any cost, but with an earnest wish and a firm purpose to spend each month and week and day, as it passes, in such a manner that we shall be able to look back upon them, not with remorse