WHENEVER the course of events brings disappointments, Pius X, so the report goes, is in the habit of saying, Dei providébit, "God will provide." The world knows that he is a man of pure heart and genuine piety, and that the reactionary tendency of his rule is due to his sincere belief in the old traditional dogmatism. He is not versed in the ways of the world and has not been touched overmuch with science or modern ideas. His horizon is limited by the traditional beliefs of his mediæval Christianity, and the strength of his faith fortifies him in his attitude. If the Catholic church needed a leader of pure heart and of honest conviction Pius X was undoubtedly the right man to fill the place of Leo XIII. A statesman like his predecessor would certainly have avoided what the world calls mistakes, for the present pope lacks the diplomatic cunning of a politician and simply obeys the behest of his conscience. This is a virtue, and we ask, can goodness ever be counted as a fault? Perhaps the very limitations of Pius X may be the means of providence to accomplish results otherwise impossible.

In our opinion the views of Pius X are antiquated, and we deem it desirable in the interest of the Roman Catholic church that this great institution should progress with the times and that it should not narrow itself to the mediæval conception which stunts its growth and alienates from it the best minds of its own fold, such as Mivart, Loyson, Loisy, Tyrrell and others. In answer to the complaints of the men who surround him, over the increase of infidelity and waywardness of the world, the pope offers his confidence in God, and after all there is much comfort in his words, Dei providébit.

There is an infallibility in the development of the world's history, and the very attitude of the present pope which has implicated the church in many problems and has caused the loss of prestige and of many political advantages, appears after all to be a part in
the dispensations of a higher will that unfailing, like any law of nature, dominates the growth of all institutions, among them also the Church of Rome.

Thinkers whose vision is not dimmed by the traditional view prevalent among the supporters of the old regime in Europe, will understand that a free church will be as much more powerful and influential than the medieval system of keeping people in bondage, as for instance the king of England, in spite of all the constitutional limitations of his government, is more powerful than the most autocratic savage chief of Africa who owns his subjects body and soul.

The world is ready for a new phase in its religious development, and the question is whether or not the Roman Catholic church shall participate in the benefits thereof. We believe that its adherents can as well adapt themselves to the modern world conception, as their Protestant brethren. But the conditions are liberty of conscience for all, freedom of inquiry for science, and a brotherly tolerance for those who differ even though they may be Protestants or infidels.

The Catholic church as a matter of principle has always opposed such demands by its rigid non possumus and as a result has suffered by being left behind in the progress of the times. The present pope does not see and does not want to see the rocks ahead. Being blind to the change in the times, he is unwilling to alter his course so as to circumnavigate the danger. May we not now interpret the several steps which he has taken as being providential in compelling the church to give up the old concordats with the states, to stand on its own footing and after wrecking the Curia itself, permanently to abandon politics so that forthwith it will become what it ought to have been from the beginning, a purely spiritual power?

There are Roman Catholics, both reactionary and liberal, who are inclined to interpret the policy of the Curia as steps which might have been avoided by diplomacy. But should we not rather take the view of Pius X himself, when he finds comfort in the words Deus providebit?

The Roman Catholic church is the most conservative Christian institution. It has maintained the old ritual more faithfully than any one of the Protestant denominations and has developed Christian art in its most beautiful and classical form. There is much that is admirable and great in its traditions if only the shackles of mediævalism could be broken. In our opinion this is possible, and there are some of her devout sons who take this view and would fain attempt to do the work of reform. But they have so far been thwarted
in their aspirations, and have been branded as the worst enemies of
the church, and fully as bad as Luther. We would therefore ask our
Catholic brethren to bear with us for a while and understand the
grand opportunity which now faces their church, and we wish them
to be convinced that our suggestions are made in the spirit of gen-
une sympathy. If we allow modernists to say a word of criticism
it is not because of ill will, nor spite, nor hostility on our part, but
in the hope that it will serve a higher purpose.

His Holiness is a good Catholic and he tries to be a good Roman-
ist, because he thinks that that is his duty. But here he fails. He
has not the Romanist’s temper nor has he been trained in Romanist
diplomacy.

We distinguish between Romanism and Catholicism and while
we sympathize with Catholicism, we make no secret of the fact that
we are opposed to Romanism. Romanism dominates the Roman
Catholic church to-day and both the Curia and its abettors identify
both. They state that no one can be a good Catholic without sub-
mitting to Romanist principles by which the church happens to be
governed. But we demur. We believe it to be possible that Catholi-
cism can exist without Romanism. We would be sorry if we had
said one word against Catholicism; and knowing that Romanists
will interpret the criticism of Romanism as a hostility to Catholicism,
we warn the reader, especially the Catholic reader, not to misunder-
stand our attitude.

The present Pope commands our highest esteem on account of
his sincere honesty, his genuine piety, and the pure simplicity of his
life. He has all the qualities of a reformer and indeed he has done
some reform work in abolishing the ceremonial, as well as in the
papal household many too worldly customs. His personality is un-
ostentatious and so he prefers to prove the dignity of his office not
by pomp but by holiness and faith. What an excellent man he would
be if his faith were broad enough to see the significance of science
so as to understand the dawn that indicates the new era. However,
though this talent has not been given to him, he still retains the
nobility of soul as a man of conviction who tries to do his duty, and
that may be providential.

Where a man of his type does not see his way clearly, he is yet
convinced that he serves as an instrument in the hands of God, and
he does so serve, for finally all will come out right. It may not be in
the sense that he intends, but certainly in the sense of God—the God
of history.

We can understand that Catholics are devoted to Catholicism
but we fail to see how truly religious people can support Romanism. Catholicism is vitiated by Romanism; yet Catholicism could be cured of its ills if it would only abandon Romanism. But this is no easy task. The Curia has governed the church so long that it will not give up its prey, and there is only one chance left, namely that the Curia will overreach itself by living up to the principles of Romanism. If the pope continues his present policy the time may come when Romanism will be wrecked, and if it be wrecked we shall see whether Catholicism will not be better off without it. Deus providet.