

REVIEWING HISTORY.

BY G. P. B.

THERE seem to me to be two distinct stages in the learning of history. The first is that in which the learner gathers the facts of history. These must be gathered and arranged in the form of a connected narrative. In constructing this narrative the pupil must be led to distinguish between the more and the less important facts. To make this distinction is one of the main purposes of a review. The general method of historical study is the same as that of the study of literature. The first step in the method of both is to gather the story, and fix it well in the memory; the next step is to interpret the story; that is, find out its meaning.

The events of history are not haphazard, the work of chance. The battle of Shiloh was a surprise to one army on the first day, and a surprise to the other on the second. But it was not an accident. We often hear it said that the fate of Europe would have been different if Blucher had not come to the assistance of Wellington. Yes, but Blucher came, and it was in the order that he should come. It is often said that God is on the side of the heaviest battalions. But it is not chance that the battalions are the heaviest. Below all seeming chance and accident it is the superior idea that wins in all historical crises. There have been, for instance, decisive battles in the history of civilization. They have been decisive not alone because a Charles Martel led the forces, but because the time had come when the idea which a Charles Martel represented was strong enough, by the assistance of the genius of Charles Martel, to overpower the opposing idea. Had a smaller general

than Charles Martel led the troops of Christendom the battle of Tours might not have been won. In that case it would not have been a decisive battle, but the decisive battle would have been postponed to a later date. The wheels of civilization never move backward, though they sometimes move very slowly and with great difficulty.

But it does not seem to me to be physiological nor pedagogical to emphasize the meaning of historical events before the connected narrative of the events is well fixed in the mind, so that the child can look forward and backward along this line. It is through reflection upon this narrative that the meaning, that is, the idea that controlled the events, becomes revealed.

If we suppose that the pupils are in the narrative stage of history study how shall the review be conducted?

It is too often the case that the pupils in the study of their assigned history lessons, during the term, have not joined the events described in these lessons into a connected narrative. They have some detached snatches, but cannot think it through as a continuous story. The chief business of the review is to enable them to do this.

To do this effectually it is probable that the review must be conducted in a different manner from the advance. The text-book lesson method, by question and answer, which is admirable for first study, should give place to the topical method, in which "historical outlines," or the method of study by "outlining," should be used. The children should be led to cut loose from the text-book in a measure, and think the entire narrative through