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THE RATIONAL AND THE RATIONALISTIC HIGHER
CRITICISM.

THE word "criticism" conveys to some minds an unpleasant idea, but the right usage of the word carries with it nothing of this kind. Dryden in his preface to "The State of Innocence," makes this statement, "I must take leave to tell them that they wholly mistake the nature of criticism who think its business is principally to find fault. Criticism as it was first instituted by Aristotle was meant a standard of judging well, the chiefest principle of which is to observe those excellencies which should delight a reasonable reader."

Do you ask what criticism is in its technical sense? I answer in a single word, "inquiry." The whole business of a critic is to make inquiry. The literary critic inquires as to the authorship, the authenticity, the style and the character of a particular writing. The historical critic makes inquiry as to the date and details of an historical event, and its relation to other events which occurred before and after. The textual critic makes inquiry as to the text of the book or manuscript which is in his hand, whence has come the manuscript, what is its state of preservation, what is the element of corruption which has crept into it. It is difficult, however, to separate literary and historical inquiry. History and literature have always been and are inseparable. Shall we then find a single word to de-