

A PLEA FOR PRESERVATION.

J. B. HARRISON.

RECOGNIZING as I do the unequalled value of Niagara as a source or means of strength, refreshment, and happiness for many millions of men and women, and of elevation and beauty in our National character, and feeling most deeply interested in the effort to restore and preserve it for these high uses, I am of the opinion that if the ground about the Fall were really needed for cotton and paper mills, or any other necessary and productive human industries, it would be right to take it and appropriate and occupy it for these objects. We shall have a vast and crowded population in this part of our country before any great time has elapsed, and we are preparing conditions here in America under which the mass of men must, in large degree, live for bread for themselves, and little beyond. Whenever there is a real conflict or antagonism between economic, business or industrial interests on the one hand, and ideal or æsthetic considerations on the other, the latter must give way, and rightly, because they are secondary or subordinate when compared with the necessities of physical subsistence. But in this case of Niagara Falls, and the question of its preservation or destruction, there is no good reason



BELOW THE WHIRLPOOL.

for "huddling factories around the Falls,"—no need of it whatever. I think it the idlest thing in the world for anybody who desires the preservation of the scenery here for ideal and spiritual uses to decry or condemn the commercial spirit or business energy of our time, or to lament its application to this particular object,—the utilization of the water-power of Niagara for manufacturing purposes. He is a poor, shallow poet or artist who can see only the poetic or artistic side of things. The mass of men must always toil. Infinite drudgery is required to sustain human life under the conditions of civilized society. Millions of men must labor—must labor honestly, nobly, and happily—that one great poet may sing their life, or one man of divine genius paint a picture of immortal power and beauty.

Build the factories, then, and let Niagara turn their wheels. But where shall the factories stand? It would be a most insane and outrageous thing to place them here, amid these scenes unparalleled on the planet. It would be a wholly wanton sacrilege, a profanation unusually culpable, because entirely unnecessary. The