

Epochs in Oil.

The Chances of Success in the early history of this country, when the commerce was small, would seem to have been restricted to a far greater extent than now, when its commerce has reached proportions so large. Yet this is not the case, as shown in the business of supplying oil, which has always been a great element in trade. A comparison in respect to this article of a most interesting character is possible by a thrilling quotation from a speech of Edmund Burke, in the British Parliament in 1775, and following it by extracts from the census of 1890, both in relation to oil. Mr. Burke said :

“ Look at the manner in which the people of New England have of late carried on the whale-fishery. Whilst we follow them among the tumbling mountains of ice, and behold them penetrating into the deepest frozen recesses of Hudson's Bay and Davis's Straits ; whilst we are looking for them beneath the Arctic circle, we hear they have pierced into the opposite region of polar cold,—that they are at the antipodes, and engaged under the frozen serpent of the south. The Falkland Islands, which seemed too remote and romantic an object for the grasp of national ambition, is but a stage or resting-place in the progress of their victorious industry. Nor is the equinoctial heat more discouraging to them than the accumulated winter of both poles. We know that whilst some of these Americans draw the line and strike the harpoon on the coast of Africa, others pursue their gigantic game along the coast of Brazil. No sea but what is vexed by their fisheries. No climate that is not witness to their toils. Neither the perseverance of Holland, nor the activity of France, nor the dexterous nor firm sagacity of English enterprise, ever