

concomitants of those who frequented the Court of St. Petersburg,—cheating, drinking, in fact, most of the vices which degrade man in his lowest condition of civilization, had but a few years before not only distinguished and disgraced the Imperial Court of Russia, but had even been openly approved and shamelessly imitated by the classes which usually influence their country through their political ascendancy and social position. At that period literature had scarcely shown itself, and had certainly never appeared in a form to be recognized; but the dark clouds which had enveloped the Muscovite in impenetrable gloom since the rule of Rurik, had for upwards of a century been rolling away,—science and literature were following closely on the heels of a rapidly increasing commerce, and a gradual improvement of its means and appliances. The Government had steadily pursued a wise course to facilitate commercial intercourse between the various parts of the Empire, and to encourage mercantile relations with other peoples. Thus the Berinsky and Oginsky canals had afforded an easy communication between the ports of the Baltic and those of the Euxine, and, in like manner, the canal of Vishney