

## ANDRÉ CHENIER'S DEATH-SONG. \*

[Translated from the French by John Reade.]

\* André Chenier, for having dared to write against the excesses of his countrymen, was summoned before the Revolutionary Tribunal, condemned and executed, in the year 1794. The first eight stanzas (in the translation) he composed in prison, after his condemnation; the two last he wrote at the very foot of the scaffold, while waiting to be dragged to execution. He had just finished the line, "Le sommeil du tombeau pressera ma paupière," when his turn came, and the words had their fulfilment. In the translation, the spirit, not the letter has been regarded.

### I.

When one lone lamb is bleating in the shambles,  
And gleams the ruthless knife,  
His yester playmates pause not in their gambols,  
Their wild, free joy of life,

### II.

To think of him; the little ones that played,  
With him in sunny hours,  
In bright, green fields, and his fair form arrayed,  
With ribbons gay and flowers,

### III.

Mark not his absence from the fleecy throng;  
Unwept he sheds his blood;  
And this sad destiny is mine. Ere long  
From this grim solitude

### IV.

I pass to death. But let me bear my fate,  
And calmly be forgot;  
A thousand others in the self-same state,  
Await the self-same lot.

### V.

And what were friends to me? Oh! one kind voice,  
Heard through those prison bars;  
Did it not make my drooping heart rejoice,  
Though from my murderers

### VI.

'Twas bought, perhaps. Alas! all, all is lost!  
And yet why should my death  
Make any one unhappy? Live, my friends,  
Nor think my fleeting breath

### VII.

Calls you to come. Mayhap, in days gone by,  
I, too, from sight of sorrow  
Turned, careless, with self-wrapt un pitying eye,  
Not dreaming of to-morrow.

### VIII.

And now, misfortune presses on my heart,  
Erewhile so strong and free,  
'Twere craven to ask you to bear its smart;—  
Farewell, nor think of me!

\* \* \* \* \*

### IX.

As a faint ray or zephyr's latest breath  
Revives the dying day;  
Beneath the scaffold, that stern throne of death,  
I sing my parting lay.

### X.

Before an hour, with wakeful foot and loud,  
Has marked its journey's close  
On yon bright disk, the sleep of death shall shroud  
Mine eyes from worldly woes.