

**THE POEMS OF  
VICTOR  
HUGO, VOL. XVII**

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The poems of Victor Hugo, Vol. XVII by Victor Hugo

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**VICTOR HUGO**

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HUGO, VOL. XVII**



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THE POEMS  
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*VOLUME SEVENTEEN*

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VOLUME SEVENTEEN

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# VICTOR HUGO'S POEMS

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## LA LÉGENDE DES SIECLES

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### SULTAN MURAD

#### I

A MAN was Murad, son of Bajazet,  
Than all Rome's emperors more glorious yet.  
Fierce lions his seraglios watched before,  
Murad with murdered victims spread the floor.  
White bleaching bones between the flags you  
meet,  
Long streams of blood ran 'neath his sandaled  
feet;  
Flooding the earth, o'er all the east they past,  
And to the west their smoke and shadow cast—  
Such carnage with his scimiter he wrought,  
His horse a panther by the world was thought.  
Smyrna and Tunis, which their Beys regret,  
Like dismal corpses were on gibbets set  
Sublime! The Caucasus by force and ruse,  
And Libanus from Kirghis and the Druse  
He took. Her chiefs, when Ephesus he sacked,  
He hung; and all the priests of Patras racked.  
Through Murad's victories that widely reek,  
The vulture wipes his gore-bedabbled beak

Upon the jutting beams of Theseus' fane,  
And wolves in Athens' street unscared remain.  
The bramble clothes with green, and ivy crawls  
On all those ancient desolated walls.  
Tyre, Argos, Corinth, Varna cast to ground—  
All mute, where echo gives the only sound.  
Murad's a saint: he strangled brothers eight;  
For the last two, yet small, he chose to wait,  
And let them round the room, in ghastly fun,  
To seek their wretched mother's succor, run.  
Murad, 'mid crowds he bade to feasting, sped,  
His saber in his hand; and many a head  
Flew from its trunk, as bird from off the spray.  
Ancyra, Delphi, Naxos ruined lay.  
Whole countries like ripe fruit he down will  
strike;  
People and princes he destroyed alike,  
Temples and Gods, and palaces and kings.  
Water no greater swarms of insects brings  
Than ghosts of slaughtered kings; and specters  
grim  
Around his spears unnumbered followed him.  
Murad of Conquering Sultans, starry son,  
Ripped up twelve living children, one by one,  
A stolen apple in them to detect.  
Murad was great: he Famagusta wrecked;  
Hilla and Megara, by Allah's aid,  
Destroyed Girgente; in their ashes laid  
Fiume and Rhodes—white slaves his harem  
needs.  
Sawed 'twixt two planks of cedar, Achmet  
bleeds—  
Such honor to his uncle's rank he gives.