

the name since the death of Hunyadi. Captured by the Turks when a child and brought up as a Muhamedan in the corps of Janissaries, he distinguished himself by his prowess in the Turkish service. But during the Servian campaign of 1442 he was suddenly inspired with a feeling of duty towards his native country and the faith of his ancestors. He abandoned the Turkish host with 300 followers, obtained possession of the fortress of Kroia by stratagem, and from that day forth maintained in the wild fastnesses of Albania a desperate and successful struggle against the Turks. Only once was he defeated (in 1456); but on countless other occasions he inflicted overwhelming defeats on the enemy, and he came to be regarded as the chief bulwark of Christianity in the Balkans, assuming the title of "Athleta Christianitatis." In 1444 he summoned a council of Albanian leaders at the Venetian town of Alessio to concert defensive measures. Army after army was hurled against him, only to be repulsed and cut to pieces. After the capture of Constantinople Mohammed sent Hamsa Pasha with 50,000 men into Albania, but he was defeated by Skanderbeg with only 11,000. A few months later the Albanian hero passed through Ragusa on his way to Apulia to obtain help from Alfonso V., King of Naples, and having received promises of a contingent of Neapolitan troops, he returned in disguise to Ragusa, when he was given a ship to go to Redoni in Albania. According to Razzi,¹ the Sultan heard of this visit and raised the Ragusan tribute in consequence. The Neapolitan historian Summonte, on the other hand, states that Skan-

¹ Razzi, lib. ii. cap. v.