

# CHAPTER THREE

## IN AND AROUND THE HOLY LAND

THE LANDS taken by the Crusaders are described by Mukaddasi, an Arab traveler, as containing many beauty spots, "red, white and black, which are the fields and gardens, held to resemble the moles on a beauty's face." He divided them into four zones, the first bordering the Mediterranean, a plain with sandy tracts following one another and alternating with the cultivated land. Here were the cities of the sea coast. The second zone was mountainous and heavily wooded, possessing many springs, with frequent villages and cultivated fields. The cities here included Jerusalem and Antioch. The third zone included the valley of the Jordan, with many villages and streams, well-cultivated fields and indigo plantations. Here were Jericho and Tiberias. The fourth zone bordered on the Desert. It had mountains high and bleak, but also many villages with springs of water and forest trees. In this zone were included the important cities of Damascus and Aleppo. The climate was temperate except in that portion which lies in the center, between Mt. Seir and the Waters of Merom. This was the hot country, where grew the indigo tree, the banana and the palm.