CHAPTER 10

T H E L A N D

MEDITERRANEAN BORDERLAND

Within her post-1922 boundaries, Palestine is a very small country. Her total area is 10,429 square miles, including 272 square miles of inland water. Palestine is about nine-tenths as large as Belgium and about four-fifths as large as the Netherlands. She is about 25 percent larger than the State of Massachusetts but little more than one-fifth as large as the State of New York. Transjordan, as separated from western Palestine in the partition of 1922 (34,700 square miles), is about three and one-half times as large as Palestine.

The latitude of Palestine (29°30' to 33°15' North) corresponds approximately to that of the Atlantic Coast of the United States from Charleston, South Carolina to Jacksonville, Florida, or to that of the Pacific Coast south of San Diego, California to Guadelupe Island, Mexico. Bermuda, Dallas (Texas), and Phoenix (Arizona) lie along the latitude which corresponds with that of Palestine's northern frontier. New Orleans (Louisiana), and Houston (Texas) are along the latitude which corresponds with that of Palestine's southern frontier.

In her post-1922 limits, Palestine is more distinctively a Mediterranean country than ever before. She has lost direct contact with the Arabian desert and with the interior highland east of the Jordan rift valley. Palestine now belongs to the borderlands of the Mediterranean in her climate, her semi-aridity, and her scantiness of lowlands. She belongs to the Mediterranean malaria area. Mediterranean too are her drainage, her irrigation and her terracing: the need for these traditionally underly the difficulty of farming all around the great inland sea. Palestine is Mediterranean also in that agriculture, or more strictly horticulture -- gardening and orchard growing, rather than farming as it is understood in North America -- has traditionally been the economic basis