

THE PUBLIC DEFENDER. By Mayer C. Goldman. Putnam; \$1.

One of the many points at which we have awakened to the inadequacy of our historic institutions reveals itself in the growing consciousness of the need for reform of our criminal laws. Their roots lie far back in mediæval history, and there has been too little overhauling of them in recent times to meet the growing needs of our complex social, economic, and political life. One of the more promising attacks upon the problem of criminal procedure within the last few years has been the growing demand for a public defender, whose duties would be complementary to those of the public prosecutor. That the old system of leaving the defendant to depend wholly upon paid or assigned counsel is unfair to those with limited means is made quite clear by Mr. Goldman. Equally well does he make his point that, contrary to the opinion of some enthusiasts, the public prosecutor is not in a position to perform adequately the functions of attorney for the prosecution and for the defence. Besides the benefits which should accrue to the defendant from the services of the public defender, there are also some conspicuous civic advantages. Mr. Goldman calls attention especially to the fact that chicanery and manufactured defences will be decreased. Unfair discrimination would be eliminated through having the state officially concerned in the defence; there would be less likelihood of cases dragging out indefinitely on technicalities. At the same time investigation of evidence should be facilitated, trial expenses decreased, the *morale* of the courts improved, and popular respect for our machinery of justice increased. Mr. Goldman writes his book as a partisan of the movement. In fact, this monograph came out of his practical labors on committees and in other publicity efforts on behalf of the movement. A valuable feature of the book is an appendix giving the chronology of the movement in this country and setting forth the most important facts regarding its present employment.