FICTION.

Heart Stories.

During the year 1885 a prize, offered by a newspaper syndicate for the best piece of fiction by an American writer, was awarded to Theodore Bartlett, a young man of Milwaukee, who died before seeing his story in print. His sister, (presumably) has now given to the world in a thin volume called *Heart Stories*, a brief sketch of his life accompanying the story in question, "Lyddy," and a few other pieces in prose and verse. His literary record was a brief one, but reading these exquisitely tender and pathetic little stories, one cannot help a feeling of deep regret that a life which promised so much should have been cut off at twenty-six.—G. P. Putnam's Sons. 75c.

Birch Dene.

Mr. William Westall does not fix any exact date to his story, but it is easy to locate it in some part of the last half of the century before our own, when Draconian law was still enforced in England, and men were hanged for petty larceny, and transported for life because of a furtive clip at the edge of a coin. The mother of Rupert Ravensmere, the hero of the book, falls a victim to these cruel laws. Coming to London with her boy to meet her husband, an officer in the navy, whom she has secretly married, she is plunged into destitution by his failure to appear, and when her last penny is

spent, is turned into the street. In this extremity, she makes a half-delirious clutch at a jacket, which is hanging outside a shop for sale, and wraps it round her child; but, coming to her senses, is taking it back to its owner when she is arrested. She is tried and sentenced to death, but as she falls dead in the court room on the announcement, all further trouble on her account is spared the nation. The effect of this scene on her little boy is terrible. He is struck down with brain fever, the result of which is total lack of memory, and it is years before he can recall his true name or find the father who has long mourned him as dead. The possibilities involved in such a plot will be easily seen.—Harper & Brothers. 45c.

The Seamstress of Stettin.

Another story, and a good one, has been adapted from the German by Cornelia McFadden. *The Seamstress of Stettin* tells what one gentle, loving, Christian woman in a lowly position could do to bring comfort and the knowledge of a higher life into many homes. The scenes vary from German households of both high and low estate to battle fields, and, in all, incidents and characters are portrayed with great vivacity and picturesqueness. The lady adapter has been very successful in presenting the story she wisely selected in a charming manner. It is a wholesome book which cannot fail to do good as well as bring pleasure.—Cranston & Stowe. $1.00.

The Pace that Kills.

The contemplation and analysis of evil seems to afford that sort of fillip to Mr. Edgar Saltus' moral palate, which other men find for their physical palates in curry, cayenne, or hot chilli. The hero of this, his latest story, is unmitigatedly and coarsely bad, a brute, without even a sense of decency to soften the picture. He winds up a career of cold-blooded atrocity by attempting the murder of his own infant son, and afterward betakes himself to suicide. Exactly why a scoundrel like this should be evolved and made the subject of a fiction, is a question which his author has to settle with his individual conscience.—Belford, Clarke & Co. 50c.

Two Sides of a Story.

The short stories by George Parsons Lathrop, collected into this volume, are evidently reprinted from magazines, and, with one exception, differ but little in calibre from average work of this description. This exception is "Captain Billy," the story of a fine young seaman, son of a still finer old pilot, who makes successful love to a millionaire's daughter. There is a certain manly freshness about this little tale which recommends it.—Cassell & Co. 50c.

Uncle Piper of Piper's Hill.

This Australian story has for its hero a rich colonist, erst butcher, who imports from England the sister who had shared his early poverty, her aristocratic and highly undesirable husband, and two daughters, to take a part in his good fortune. There is little that is distinctively Australian in the plot, and the events might as well have happened in any other part of the world. This is so much the case that we are inclined to fancy that "Tasma," by which sobriquet the author veils his or her own name, may have invented his *entourage* from books, rather than from personal knowledge, but the story is well written and fairly entertaining.—Harper & Brothers. 40c.

Thackeray's Sketch-Books.

The eleventh and twelfth volumes of the Illustrated Library Edition of Thackeray contain his sketches of Paris—his "true university," the editor calls it—and of Ireland, which was almost as much of a foreign country to him as France. It is interesting today to note that, so far back as 1843, in his suppressed preface to the *Irish Sketch-Book*, Thackeray favored not only the disestablishment of the English Church in Ireland, but also the repeal of the union.—Houghton, Mifflin & Co. Each, $1.50.

One Voyage.

Curiously enough, the main actors and central figures of this tale with a marine name are a firm of Boston brokers, "Tomson & Tomson" by name. These gentlemen, who are receivers and misappliers of trust funds, think to relieve themselves of certain inconvenient demands and enquiries by shipping various of their clients off to different parts of the world. Two brothers, whose estate they have in process of depletion, they induce to go to the Levant; a father and daughter, whom they have swindled out of their all, are despatched to Buenos Ayres; and a copartner in their evil practices is deported, under orders not to return for six months. That an opportune storm and wreck should bring all these persons together on board the same ship does not enter into their calculations; but this is what happens, and it leads to a final exposure of their malpractices. It is not an over-exciting plot, as will be seen, but the manner in which it is carried out renders it duller than need be. Mr. Julius A. Palmer is fairly at home on the sea, though the device of making "Captain Walter Raleigh" carry his own father and sister about on a six months' voyage before disclosing his identity, in order to be sure that they will "love him," seems to us as unseamanlike as it is clumsy; but he is much less at home in depicting fashionable life on land. The conversation and manners of the city circles which he describes bear as little resemblance to those of real people in real life as can well be imagined. It is a study from other novels of a poor type, not from nature.—D. Lothrop Co. $1.25.

Tonight at Eight.

This is the somewhat obscure title chosen by Mrs. Fannie Aymar Matthews for a collection of comediettas, suitable for the use of amateur actors. They are light, very light, but fairly amusing, and they can be recommended as unexceptionable in moral tone, and requiring a very easy outfit of appurtenances and properties.—Belford, Clarke & Co. 50c.

The London Medical Student, by Albert Smith, is a reprint from *Punch* of a series of papers giving a view of the life of those students who are more intent upon "seeing the town" than upon lectures or hospital practice. The book is humorous after a rather heavy English manner. —John B. Alden.