

The Collector's Miscellany

*A journal for collectors of Old and Modern Boys' Books,
Bloods, Penny Number Romances, etc.*

No. 21 (New Series)

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BROTHERS OF THE BLOOD

BY J. P. QUAINÉ

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ANOTHER oldtimer, Herdman, was also a collector of old-plate, was murdered one night, in the middle thirties, by a burglar who was after the silverware. Herdman's brains were bashed out, and the blood, appropriately enough, was splashed on the backs of a shelf of "dreadfuls." So of the myriad pen pals with whom I used to correspond and swap lunacy, there remain but two alive! The before-referred-to Joe Parks of Yorkshire, and Arget Harris, a sturdy old octogenarian of Dowlais, Glamorganshire, who still lives in the days of Tymm Shon Catti (the Welsh Robin Hood). Henry Steel, (he died last year), was a Cockney musician, and an expert on old London and its dark deeds, its bravos, its swashbucklers, and cloak-and-dagger miscreants and last, most important of all, the late John Medcraft. He was an Essex leather manufacturer in a large way of business, who next to the late Barry Ono amassed one of the biggest collections in the world. He had runs of all the old journals, and practically everything that was issued in the penny weekly numbers between 1828 and 1900. His little lot ran into countless thousands; all mint copies, with startling coloured wrappers, and all the points of allure so dear to the heart of the collector. For be it known that the "blood" collector shares with highbrow brothers the desire for tall copies, wide margins and original wrappers. We know what happened to the Barry Ono collection but what has happened to the collection of the late John Medcraft?