

THE ABYSMAL BRUTE

them when he sold out? Now that I 'm thinkin', that was the last time I laid eyes on him — when he sold them out. 'T was all of twenty years and more ago. His wife had just died. I met him headin' for the Ferry. 'Where away, old sport?' says I. 'It's me for the woods,' says he. 'I've quit. Good-by, Tim, me boy.' And I've never seen him from that day to this. Of course he ain't dead."

"You say when his wife died — did he have any children?" Stubener queried.

"One, a little baby.. He was luggin' it in his arms that very day."

"Was it a boy?"

"How should I be knowin'?"

It was then that Sam Stubener reached a decision, and that night found him in a Pullman speeding toward the wilds of Northern California.