

**BEGGARS' GOLD**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649279241

Beggars' gold by Ernest Poole

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**ERNEST POOLE**

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*By*  
ERNEST POOLE

HIS FAMILY  
THE HARBOR  
HIS SECOND WIFE  
"THE DARK PEOPLE"  
BLIND, A STORY OF THESE TIMES  
THE VILLAGE, RUSSIAN IMPRESSIONS

# BEGGARS' GOLD

*Blair*

BY

ERNEST POOLE

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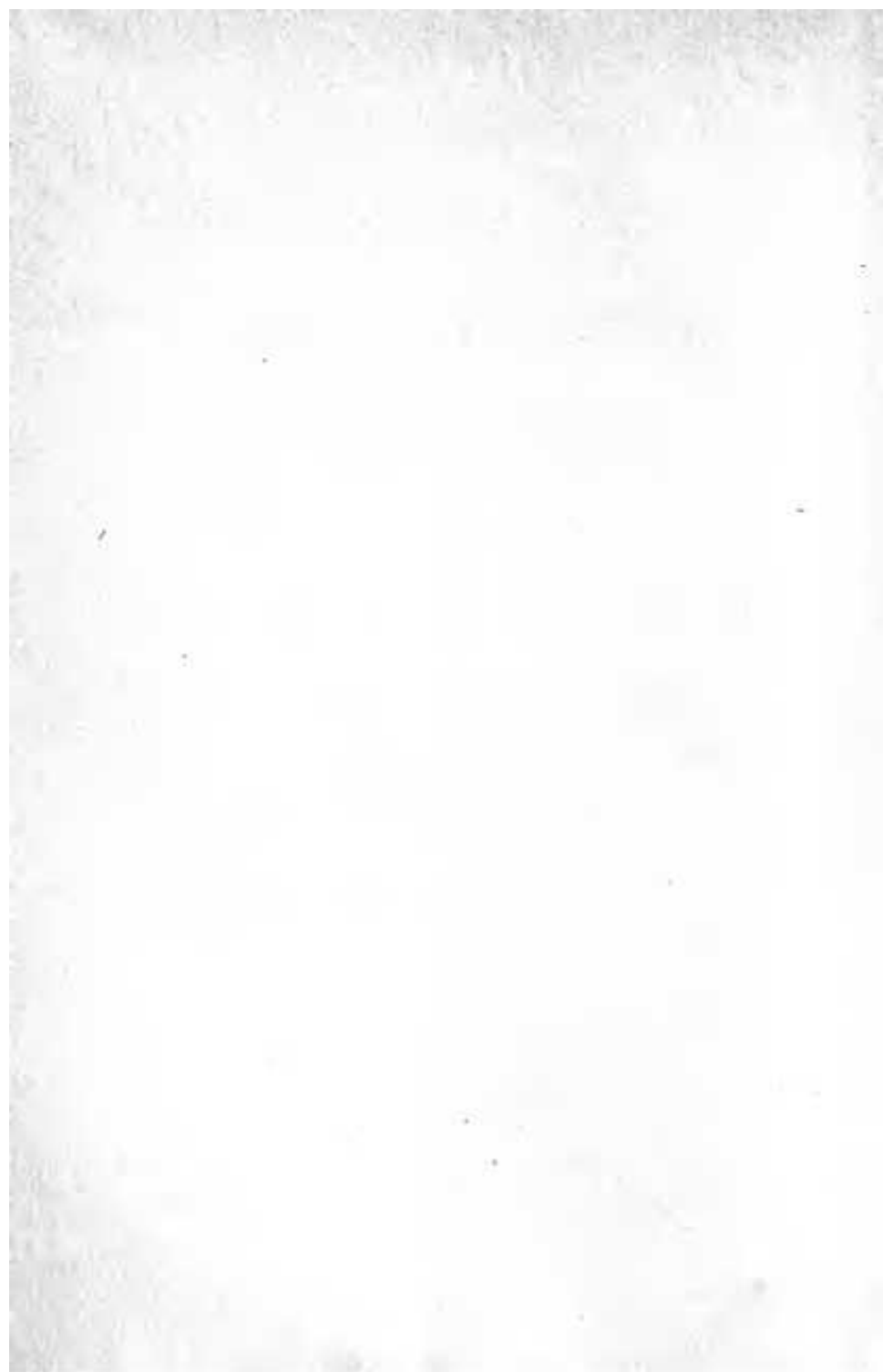
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To M. A.

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# BEGGARS' GOLD

## CHAPTER I.

### I.

**I**N New York, toward the end of an afternoon in the autumn of 1894, through the strident hubbub, the jostling, nervous rush of the crowds pouring into the old Grand Central Station, came two figures so incongruous that even in that whirling haste they drew curious glances. One was a large, heavy, young man of about twenty-eight, an American. The other, who barely reached to his waist, was a stout, little Chinese boy, in a padded coat of dark, blue silk, a black cap with a big, red button, blue trousers and white stockings. As he jogged along, his diminutive pigtail hung straight down and his face looked solemnly straight ahead; but his black eyes kept darting about, and as the pair pressed into the crowd his clutch on his huge companion's hand tightened and his jaws set hard.

They had come so far ahead of time that they found the train not yet made up, so they went to the waiting room. The place was filled with travellers, many of whom were as bored as they seemed; but scattered all about the room were others whose impassive eyes concealed an inner universe of travellers' thoughts and feelings — memories, anticipations, pictures of places left behind but vividly remembered now, homes and busy offices; and other scenes that loomed ahead; desires, schemes and business worries, sharp anxieties, loves and hates, jokes remembered with keen relish, and the pettiest little plans, hurt vanities, small jealousies — all back of those impassive eyes. Each one, busy with his own, paid little heed to the others. But even these people, as moments passed, cast looks of curious interest at the big man in his plain, gray clothes and the fantastic, little boy. What had brought this couple together?

A few of the people sitting there gave more than a casual glance to the pair, and most of these more attentive observers soon forgot to look at the child in their deepening interest in the man. There was nothing bizarre about him. His big burly figure was clothed in a cheap loose suit of grey, with bulging pockets at the sides, and he wore a large common straw hat over a thick shock of hair. What drew their attention more and more, and