

**BEHIND THE  
ARRAS. A NOVEL**

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Behind the arras. A novel by Constance Maude Neville

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**CONSTANCE MAUDE NEVILLE**

**BEHIND THE  
ARRAS. A NOVEL**



# BEHIND THE ARRAS.

A Novel.

BY

CONSTANCE MAUDE NEVILLE.

*Behind the arras I'll concey myself,  
To hear the process,*

--Hamlet: Act III, Scene 3.

SAN FRANCISCO:

A. L. BANCROFT AND COMPANY,

721 MARKET STREET.

1877.

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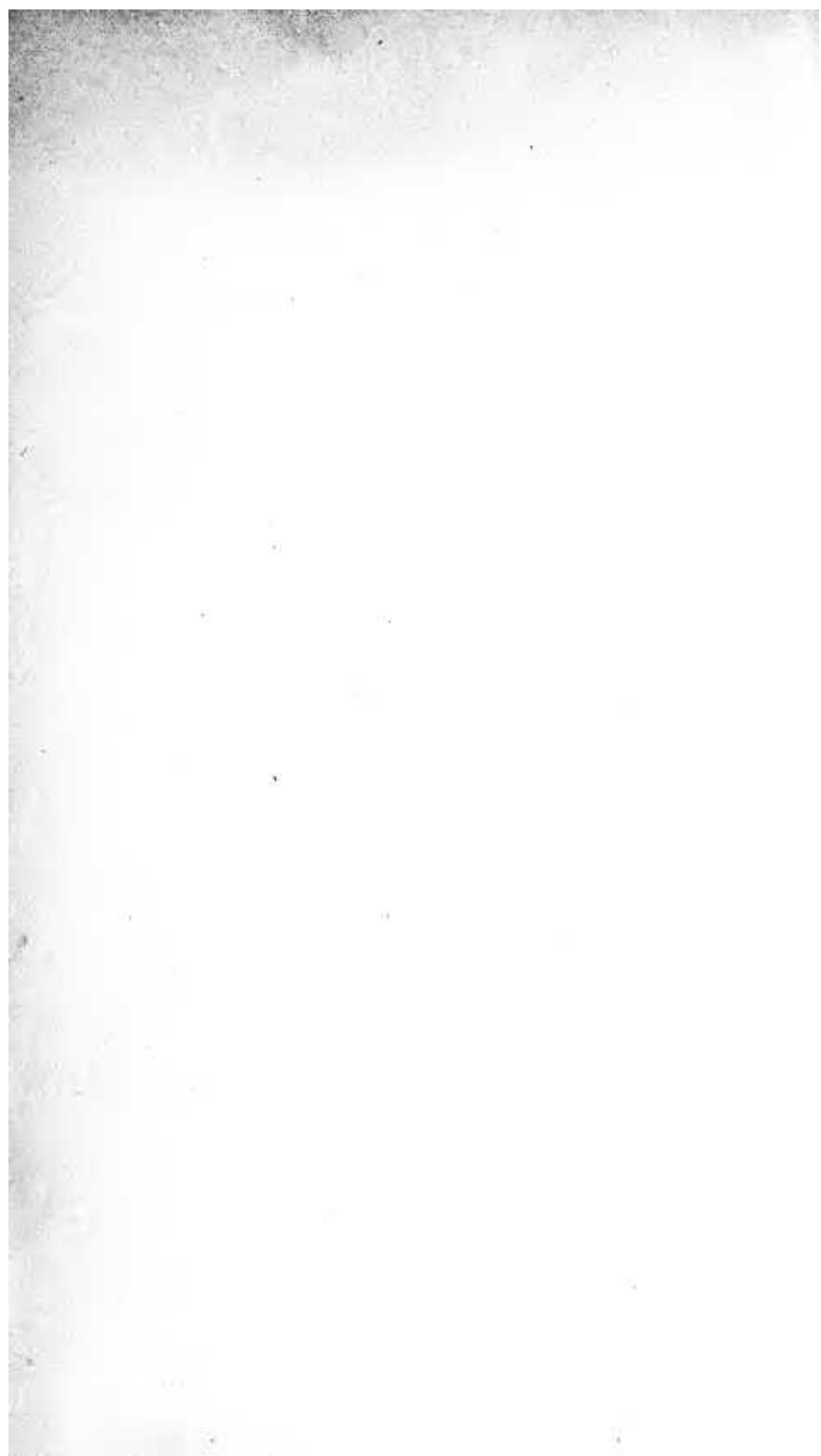
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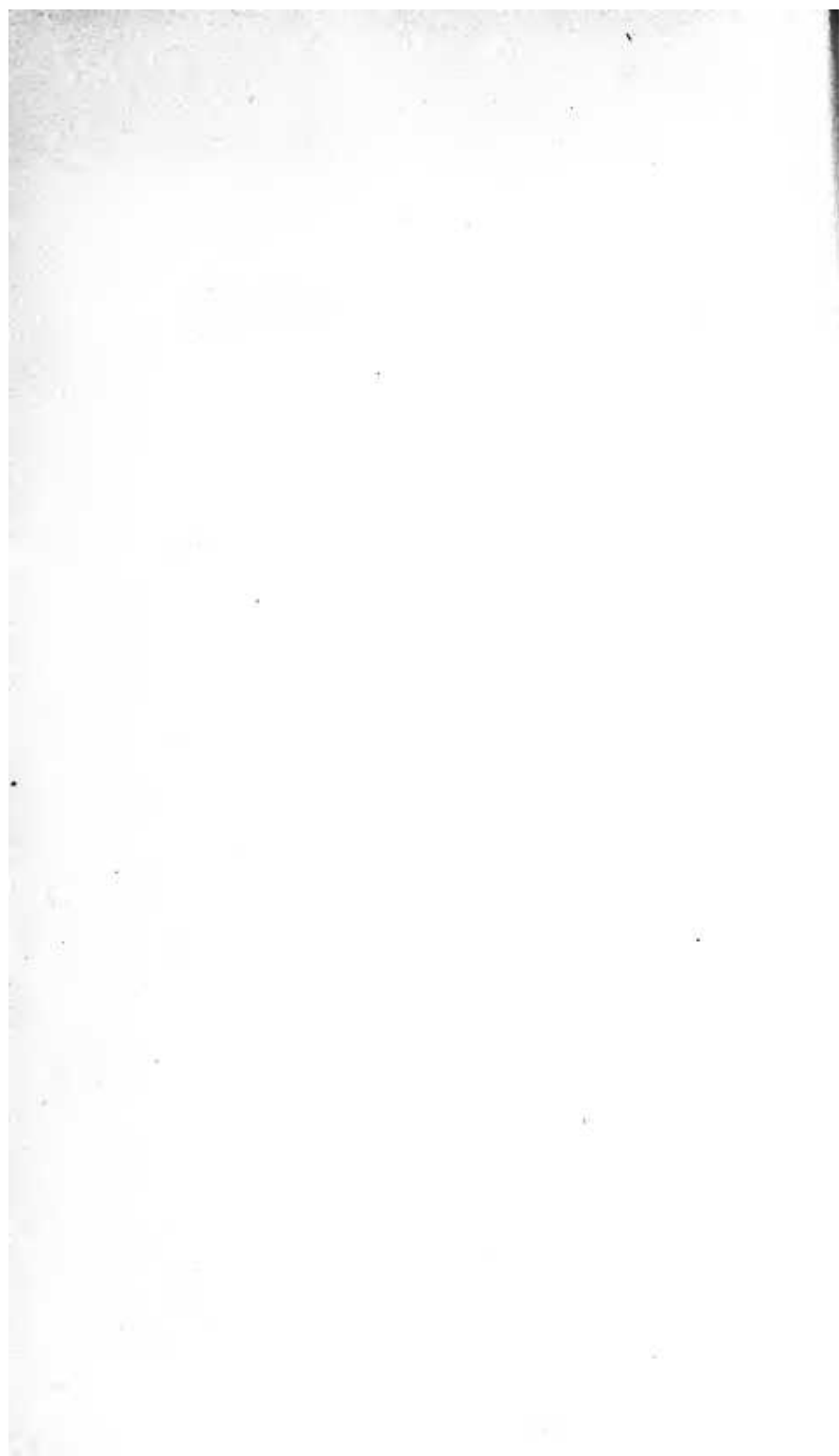
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TO  
THE MANY FRIENDS  
WHO HAVE  
ENCOURAGED ITS PUBLICATION,  
*THIS BOOK*  
IS  
GRATEFULLY INSCRIBED.





BEHIND THE ARRAS.



# BEHIND THE ARRAS.

## BOOK FIRST.

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### CHAPTER I.

My business in this state  
Made me a looker-on.

—Measure for Measure: Act V, Scene I.

**S**CENE: The grounds of Bratton Hall, —shire. A gently undulating surface, with here and there little knolls clothed with the greenest of grass and crowned with groups of stately oaks and majestic elms. Charming cool arbors covered with creeping vines whose flowers, peeping within through the interstices of the lattice work, seem to invite one with their delicious odors for a lounge on a warm day, are scattered in the little valleys formed by these hillocks. A murmur of waters is heard as a winding stream feeds a miniature lake, whose placid surface is screened from view by the weeping willows that fringe its banks. Shrubbery is in abundance everywhere, furnishing homes for multitudes of birds, and luxuriant shade for less sweet voiced mortals. Nor are flowers wanting in all their varied hues; but so artistically are they arranged that the brightest colors blend harmoniously, and nothing glaring meets the eye. This seemingly enchanted spot is surrounded by towering poplars which give character by their stiff beauty to the whole scene, and form the boundary line beyond which stretch far away on every side long vistas of rolling park land and verdant meadow.

The *dramatis personæ* are three: One, a man, tall and *distingui* in appearance as he approaches in the distance; by his side, the slight, graceful figure of a young girl who moves silently along with bent head, listening, it seems, to her companion. The two are Alva Ingolsby, a friend and visitor at Bratton Hall, and Lucy Egerton, the adopted daughter of Sir Griffith Egerton, Bart., its master. As they turn down one of the rose-bordered paths that lead to the lake before reaching the arbor in which, I, Julia Lifford, the third,