



# The Dead Letter and The Figure Eight

*Metta Fuller Victor*

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## **The Dead Letter and The Figure Eight** Metta Fuller Victor

Before Raymond Chandler, before Dorothy Sayers or Agatha Christie, there was Metta Fuller Victor, the first American author—man or woman—of a full-length detective novel. This novel, *The Dead Letter*, is presented here along with another of Victor's mysteries, *The Figure Eight*. Both written in the 1860s and published under the name Seeley Regester, these novels show how—by combining conventions of the mystery form first developed by Edgar Allan Poe with those of the domestic novel—Victor pioneered the domestic detective story and paved the way for generations of writers to follow.

In *The Dead Letter*, Henry Moreland is killed by a single stab to the back. Against a background of post-Civil War politics, Richard Redfield, a young attorney, helps Burton, a legendary New York City detective, unravel the crime. In *The Figure Eight*, Joe Meredith undertakes a series of adventures and assumes a number of disguises to solve the mystery of the murder of his uncle and regain the lost fortune of his angelic cousin.

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