

# THE CASE OF GEORGE DEDLOW

Rejected by medical journals, George Dedlow's narrative unfolds the extraordinary and psychical journey of his life, particularly during and after the Civil War. Being a physician's son with aspirations to partner with his father, George's path takes a detour as the Civil War ignites. With medical studies interrupted and propelled by necessity and sense of duty, he joins the army as an assistant surgeon. Dedlow's service is marked by his eventual transition into active combat roles, leading to a grievous wounding during a skirmish near Nashville that cost him both arms.

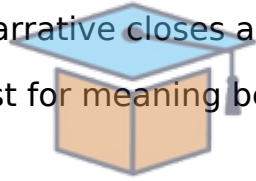
Dedlow's early experience in the army embeds him into the cruel realities of war, from witnessing the constant threat of guerrillas to managing scarce rations and medical supplies in a blockhouse along the Cumberland River. An ill-fated mission for medical supplies leads to his capture and severe injury by guerrilla forces, leading to a complex and painful journey back behind Union lines—a journey marked by a significant loss: the amputation of his right arm.

Despite grave injuries, Dedlow's sense of duty sees him rejoining the army, only to be crippled further in the Battle of Chickamauga, losing his legs. His survival embarks him on a new battle; one against pain and his shifting perception of self, rooted in the loss of his limbs. Hospitalized, Dedlow grapples with the despair and horror of his new reality, forced to reckon with the diminished sense of his existence and identity. The physical and psychological toll of his sacrifices manifest vividly, challenging his understanding of life and the essence of personal identity.

Taken to Philadelphia for further recovery, Dedlow delves into the peculiar and often discomfiting sensations—or lack thereof—pertaining to his amputated limbs, a phenomenon that muddles his connection to the world and himself. His thoughts on individuality, existence, and the palpable loss of self interweave, offering profound

insights into the personal costs of war. Amidst pain and uncharted psychological territory, Dedlow finds himself in spiritualist circles, seeking connections and existential affirmations beyond the physical realm. Here, in a bizarre and controversial spiritualist séance, Dedlow experiences a momentary and surreal reunion with his amputated legs, rekindling the flames of self-awareness, however transient and debated the occurrence may be.

Returned to his hometown, surrounded by care yet haunted by irrevocable losses, George Dedlow's narrative closes as a testament to the invisible wounds of war and the unyielding quest for meaning beyond the confines of physical existence.



Summary