

CHAPTER X.

THREE HUNDRED FIGHTING REGIMENTS.

IT is not claimed that these are *the* Three Hundred Fighting Regiments of the Army ; but, that they are three hundred regiments which evidently did considerable fighting. There were, undoubtedly, others which did equally good or, perhaps, better fighting, and their gallant services will be fully recognized by the writers who are conversant with their history. But, for lack of other information, this chapter deals only with those which sustained the heaviest losses in battle. It includes every regiment in the Union Armies which lost over 130 in killed and died of wounds during the war, together with a few whose losses were somewhat smaller, but whose percentage of killed entitles them to a place in the list. It may be suggested that large casualty lists are not necessarily indicative of the fighting qualities of a regiment ; that on many occasions regiments have rendered valuable service and achieved a brilliant success with but slight loss. Granted, as regards some particular action or instance ; but, in the long run active service brings its many scars ; where the musketry was the hottest, the dead lay thickest ; and there is no better way to find the fighting regiments than to follow up the bloody trail which marked their brave advance.

The losses in these three hundred regiments have been compiled from their muster-out-rolls, and counted name by name ; the total of the deaths is, in each case, correct. At times, it was difficult to decide as to the company to which a death should be tallied : for men were often transferred from one company to another, and, where companies were consolidated, a dead man's name often appeared in two or more companies in the same regiment.

Then, again, in dividing the deaths among the different battles it was sometimes difficult to ascertain the action in which the wound was received, as the date of death was often given, instead of the date when the wound was received. In such cases the death was tallied to the last battle previous to the man's death, that is, the last battle in which his regiment was engaged. In some instances the rolls bear the names of men marked simply as "killed in action ;" these are recorded here as killed at Place Unknown. But these inaccuracies are few and slight, leaving the main result substantially correct as to each regiment.

In some regiments the rolls were in such condition, owing to the consolidation of companies and accessions of new companies bearing the same letters as the old ones, or to the reorganization consequent upon the reënlistment of the regiment, that the regular form of tabulation was not practicable, and, so, after stating the total number of deaths — omitting company losses — the list of battles is given, accompanied by the official casualty lists of killed, wounded, and missing, instead of the number of "killed and died of wounds." Where the casualties are stated thus, in "killed, wounded, and missing," the wounded includes the mortally wounded. This must be borne in mind to properly understand the nature of the loss.

Where it could be done with accuracy, the number of killed and mortally wounded in each action is given in the regimental tabulations of these three hundred regiments ; and this is done without confusing it with an additional statement of wounded and missing. The