

Gettysburg and Waterloo.

As the battles of Waterloo and Gettysburg, from their size, bloodiness, and decisive importance, have so often provoked comparison, it may be of interest to readers to compare the force and loss of the combatants in each. I take the figures for Waterloo from the official reports as given by Dorsey Gardner in his "Quatre Bras, Ligny, and Waterloo"; and the figures for Gettysburg from "Battles and Leaders of the Civil War," and from Captain William F. Fox's "Regimental Losses in the American Civil War."

Unlike Waterloo, Gettysburg was almost purely a fight of infantry and artillery; the cavalry, which did good work during the campaign, played no part in the battle itself, the bulk of the horse of the two contending armies being at the time engaged in a subsidiary but entirely distinct fight of their own. The troops thus engaged should not be included in the actual fighting forces employed at Gettysburg itself, any more than Grouchy's French and the Prussians against whom they were pitted at Wavre can be included in the armies actually engaged at Waterloo. The exclusion will be made in both cases, and the comparison thereby rendered more easy.

Even making these exclusions it is impossible wholly to reconcile the various authorities; but the following figures must be nearly accurate. At Gettysburg there were present in action 80,000 to 85,000 Union troops, and of the Confederates some 65,000. At Waterloo there were 120,000 soldiers of the Allies under Wellington and Blücher, and 72,000 French under Napoleon; or, there were about 150,000 combatants at Gettysburg and about 190,000 at Waterloo. In each case the weaker army made the attack and was defeated. Lee did not have to face such heavy odds as Napoleon; but, whereas Napoleon's defeat was a rout in which he lost all his guns and saw his soldiers become a disorganized rabble, Lee drew off his army in good order, his cannon uncaptured, and the *morale* of his formidable soldiers unshaken. The defeated Confederates lost in killed and wounded 15,530, and in captured 7467, some of whom were likewise wounded, or 23,000 in all; the defeated French lost from 25,000 to 30,000 — probably nearer the latter number. The Confederates thus lost in killed and wounded at least 25 per cent. of their force, and yet they preserved their artillery and their organization; while the French suffered an even heavier proportional loss and were turned into a fleeing mob.

Comparing the victors, we find that the forces of the Allies at Waterloo consisted of several different kinds of troops, and together with the losses can best be presented in tabulated form. Wellington had under him 68,000 English, Germans, and Dutch-Belgians, while Blücher had 52,000 Prussians.

	Number.	Killed and wounded.	Missing.	engaged.	Per cent. of killed and wounded to force.
Wellington's British	23,991	6,344	592		.26+
" Germans	25,886	4,006	478		.15+
" Dutch-Belgians	17,784	1,000	3,000		
Blücher's Prussians	52,944	5,612	1,386		.11-
	119,605	16,962	5,456		.15

The figures for the Dutch-Belgians, who behaved very badly, are mere estimates; probably the missing numbered more than 3000, and it is very unlikely that the total killed and wounded went as high as 1000.

At Gettysburg the Northerners lost 17,555 killed and wounded and 5,435 missing; in other words, they suffered an actually greater loss than the much larger army of Wellington and Blücher; relatively, it was half as great again, being something like twenty-two per cent. in killed and wounded alone. This gives some idea of the comparative obstinacy of the fighting.

But in each case the brunt of the battle fell unequally on different organizations. At Waterloo the English did the heaviest fighting and suffered the heaviest loss; and though at Gettysburg no troops behaved badly, as did the Dutch-Belgians, yet one or two of the regiments composed of foreigners certainly failed to distinguish themselves. Meade had seven infantry corps, one of which was largely held in reserve. The six that did the actual fighting may be grouped in pairs. The Second and Third numbered nominally 23,610 (probably there were in reality several hundred less than this), and lost in killed and wounded 7586, or thirty-two per cent., and 974 missing; so that these two corps, whose aggregate force was smaller than that of Wellington's British regiments at Waterloo, nevertheless suffered a considerably heavier loss, and therefore must have done bloodier, and in all probability more obstinate, fighting. The First and Eleventh Corps, who were very roughly handled the first day, make a much worse showing in the "missing" column, but their death rolls are evidences of how bravely they fought. They had in all 18,600 men, of whom 6092, or thirty-two per cent., were killed and wounded, and 3733 missing. The Fifth and Twelfth Corps, of in the aggregate 20,147 men, lost 2990, or fifteen per cent., killed and wounded, and 278 missing.

Thus of the six Union corps which did the fighting at Gettysburg four suffered a relatively much heavier loss in killed and wounded than Wellington's British at Waterloo, and the other two a relatively much heavier loss than Blücher's Prussians.

In making any comparison between the two battles, it must of course be remembered that one occupied but a single day and the other very nearly three; and it is hard to compare the severity of the strain of a long and very bloody, with that caused by a short, and only less bloody, battle.

Gettysburg consisted of a series of more or less completely isolated conflicts; but owing to the loose way in which the armies marched into action many of the troops that did the heaviest fighting were engaged

for but a portion of the time. The Second and Third Corps were probably not heavily engaged for a very much longer period than the British regiments at Waterloo.

Both were soldiers' rather than generals' battles. Both were waged with extraordinary courage and obstinacy and at a fearful cost of life. Waterloo was settled by a single desperate and exhausting struggle; Gettysburg took longer, was less decisive, and was relatively much more bloody. According to Wellington the chief feature of Waterloo was the "hard pounding"; and at Gettysburg the pounding—or, as Grant called it, the "hammering"—was even harder.

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