

a junior
colleague to "give no reasons" for his decisions, and the maxim
is even more applicable to a general than to a judge.]

When the outlook is bright, bring it before their eyes; but tell
them nothing when the situation is gloomy.

58. Place your army in deadly peril, and it will survive;
plunge it into desperate straits, and it will come off in safety.

[These words of Sun Tzu were once quoted by Han Hsin in
explanation of the tactics he employed in one of his most
brilliant battles, already alluded to on p. 28. In 204 B.C., he
was sent against the army of Chao, and halted ten miles from the
mouth of the Ching-hsing pass, where the enemy had mustered in
full force. Here, at midnight, he detached a body of 2000 light
cavalry, every man of which was furnished with a red flag. Their
instructions were to make their way through narrow defiles and
keep a secret watch on the enemy. "When the men of Chao see me
in full flight," Han Hsin said, "they will abandon their
fortifications and give chase. This must be the sign for you to
rush in, pluck down the Chao standards and set up the red banners
of Han in their stead." Turning then to his other officers, he
remarked: "Our adversary holds a strong position, and is not
likely to come out and attack us until he sees the standard and
drums of the commander-in-chief, for fear I should turn back and
escape through the mountains." So saying, he first of all sent
out a division consisting of 10,000 men, and ordered them to form
in line of battle with their backs to the River Ti. Seeing this
maneuver, the whole army of Chao broke into loud laughter. By
this time it was broad daylight, and Han Hsin, displaying the
generalissimo's flag, marched out of the pass with drums beating,
and was immediately engaged by the enemy. A great battle
followed, lasting for some time; until at length Han Hsin and his
colleague Chang Ni, leaving drums and banner on the field, fled
to the division on the river bank, where another fierce battle
was raging. The enemy rushed out to pursue them and to secure
the trophies, thus denuding their ramparts of men; but the two
generals succeeded in joining the other army, which was fighting
with the utmost desperation. The time had now come for the 2000
horsemen to play their part. As soon as they saw the men of Chao
following up their advantage, they galloped behind the deserted
walls, tore up the enemy's flags and replaced them by those of
Han. When the Chao army looked back from the pursuit, the sight
of these red flags struck them with terror. Convinced that the
Hans had got in and overpowered their king, they b