

In cases like these we are really controlled by two different motives; the stronger but more remote being the desire to stand the test, and to have the decision given in our favour; the weaker, which is closer at hand, the desire to be left in peace and undisturbed for the present, and consequently in further enjoyment of the advantage that hoping on in uncertainty has over what might possibly be an unhappy issue.

Consequently, in this case the same happens to our moral vision as to our physical, when a smaller object near at hand conceals from view a bigger object some distance away.

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The course and affairs of our individual life, in view of their true meaning and connection, are like a piece of crude work in mosaic. So long as one stands close in front of it, one cannot correctly see the objects presented, or perceive their importance and beauty; it is only by standing some distance away that both come into view. And in the same way one often understands the true connection of important events in one's own life, not while they are happening, or even immediately after they have happened, but only a long time afterwards.