



# THE SELF-SAME TEST



Edgar Guest



**I**t is all in vain to preach of the truth,  
To the eager ears of a trusting youth,  
If, whenever a lad is standing by,  
He sees you cheat and he hears you lie:  
Fine words may grace the advice you give,  
But youth will learn from the way you live.

Honor's a word that a thief may use,  
High-sounding language the base may choose.  
Speech is empty and preaching vain,  
Though the truth shines clear and the lesson's plain;  
If you play false, he will turn away,  
For your life must square with the things you say.

He won't tread the path of your righteous talk,  
But will follow the path which you daily walk.  
"Not as I do, but do as I say,"  
Won't win him to follow the better way;  
Through the thin veneer of your speech he'll see  
Unless you're the man you would have him be.

The longer you live you will find this true:  
As you would teach, you must also do.  
Rounded sentences, smooth and fair,  
Were better not said if your deeds aren't square,  
If you'd teach him to live to his very best  
You must live your life by the self-same test.