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SUMMARY: Dedicatory epistle to Oxford in Geoffrey Gates' *The Defence of Military Profession*, published in 1579. The dedication is dated 23 December 1578.

To the right honourable Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxenford, Viscount Bulbeck, Lord of  
Escales and Badlesmere, and Lord Great Chamberlain of England

Experience beareth such a sovereignty over all things human and divine that without it the quality or power either of word, deed, devise, or matter cannot make itself known to the understanding of men, for the heavenly truth justifieth itself by the effects of his nature and power made apparent to the eyes & capacities of earthly creatures.

Adam, not well stayed upon the truth of God's word, transgressed the commandment, & feeling the plagues of his offence, had thereby experience of the power & truth of his Almighty Creator.

The first world, overflowing in wickedness, was drowned in the flood of God's vengeance to give experience to the world that ensued what it is to contemn his word and prophets.

Noah believed the word of the Lord, and obeying his commandment prepared the ark & was saved in the flood, he & all his family, by experience, whereof the world is made to understand the power and assurance of God's truth and favour toward his elect people.

The Lord willed Moses to denounce his plagues against Egypt, and in the effect of his power & truth he accomplished the same upon man and beast, upon fruit and tree, upon earth and water, the experience whereof made Moses and the Israelites so hardy in faith that they took their way through the Red Sea as through the fields on dry land.

Pharaoh in the hardness of his heart pursued the Israelites and was drowned, he and all his army, in the paths where Jacob went dry-shod, whereby all the kings and princes of the earth had & have experience what it is to contemn God, to persecute his people, & to despise his word and ministers.

The like experience made Joshua bold to lead Israel through the deep waters of Jordan, where they passed on foot and went dry-shod to land.

The Israelites, breaking the covenant of the Lord their God & standing in their rebellion, were destroyed out of the land of Judah and Jerusalem and made slaves to the Chaldeans, whereby they were taught by experience (and so are we by the same example) what it is to despise the Lord of Hosts, and to stand in disobedience against his majesty.

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The Lord restoring Jacob out of Chaldea to his inheritance again, according as he had promised by the mouths of his prophets, doth teach us by experience how faithful he is in his promises, that we therefore should rest upon him without doubting.

Christ our Saviour wrought wonders before all Israel, that their eyes might see his divine power and believe him for his works' sake, but they believed not their own eyes, and are therefore confounded by the experience that testifieth against their own consciences.

By examples of experience the Lord Jesus taught the Jews, as by that of Dives and Lazarus, of the sower of seed, of the evil steward etc., as by familiar demonstrations.

Our forefathers, the old Christians, so polluted their tabernacles with the works of impiety that they extinguished the Holy Ghost in the sanctuary, whereby they fell to ignorance and corruption and were given over to superstition and idolatry, the experience whereof should teach us of these days, and our children, to walk wisely in the presence of our God.

Experience discovereth the effects of wisdom and folly, and maketh demonstration of the fruits of virtue and of vice, and teacheth to distinguish betwixt the righteous and the wicked, betwixt the fool and the wise man etc.

Experience is the mother and nurse of the policies and governments, civil and marital, private & public, guiding the counsels and doings of men with orderly discretion.

Experience of the inordinate iniquities of men founded the laws and the judgment seat.

The experience of the troublesome furies of men founded arms and advanced military profession for the repressing and restraining of the tyrannies and noyful malice of the wicked.

The experience of the profit and value of law and arms maketh all prudent states and commonwealths to embrace and to uphold them both with much care and endeavour.

So to conclude, experience is the ordinary companion and natural ornament of reason, which maketh men wise in knowledge & prudent in the direction and use of things. He therefore that judgeth or directeth against experience is not indeed a man, but a fool more ignorant than a beast.

The experience of other men's harms warneth the wise to beware.

The experience of foreign evils warneth England to waken itself out of security and to be watchful, and wisely to take itself.

Experience hath taught me to love and to honour arms, and in the zeal of a good heart to covet the advancement of martial occupation, which made me (an unlettered man) to take unto me a notary to set down in writing this drift in the defence and praise of warlike

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proweess against all contemners of the same, for the benefit and encouragement of my country & countrymen.

And finally, the experience of the high nobleness & honour of you, my singular good Lord, doth embolden me (in the love of a faithful heart to your renowned virtues), most humbly to commend this little work to your honourable protection, that under the shield of your noble favour and judgment it may stand in grace before our nation to some good effect. God grant it. To who be praise, & to your good Lordship abundance of heavenly graces and fatherly blessings, even to everlasting life, Amen. London 23 December 1578.

Your Honour's most humble,  
Geoffrey Gates