

## LORD ELGIN

unwilling witnesses or reluctant adherents to views which originally they were prepared to oppose. . . .” The result was that, “in an incredibly short time he attained an accurate and clear conception of the essential facts before him, and was thus enabled to strike out a course which he could consistently pursue amid all difficulties, because it was in harmony with the actual facts and the permanent conditions of the problem he had to solve.” Here we have the secret of his success in grappling with the serious and complicated questions which constantly engaged his attention in the administration of Canadian affairs.

After leaving the university with honour, he passed several years on the family estate, which he endeavoured to relieve as far as possible from the financial embarrassment into which it had fallen ever since his father’s extravagant purchase in Greece. In 1840, by the death of his eldest brother, George, who died unmarried, James became heir to the earldom, and soon afterwards entered parliament as member for the borough of Southampton. He claimed then, as always, to be a Liberal Conservative, because he believed that “the institutions of our country, religious as well as civil, are wisely adapted, when duly and faithfully administered, to promote, not the interest of any class or classes exclusively, but the happiness and welfare of the great body of the people”; and because he felt that, “on the maintenance of these institutions, not