

ERNEST REUBEN  
LILIENTHAL  
AND HIS FAMILY

Louis Sloss

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*Prepared from  
family histories, documents,  
and interviews*

*by*

F. GORDON O'NEILL

1949

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LILIENTHAL

## LOUIS SLOSS\*

### THE OVERLAND TRAIL RIDE

Of the party was Mr. Louis Sloss, who had moved to Mackville, Kentucky, not far from the McDonald Homestead, after Dr. McDonald had left there, and had become well acquainted with his family. He introduced himself to Dr. McDonald, who was delighted with this chance meeting with one from the home he had not seen for five years.

In due time the procession started on the long and hazardous trip, but before traveling twenty days, it became evident that the wagons were overloaded and the preparations inadequate to perform the stipulated trip. Cholera broke out and prevailed all along the emigration line, and of the number in this train, passengers and teamsters, about one hundred sixty-five in all, forty-two died before reaching California, nearly all from cholera. . . .

The best class of citizens California has ever received were those that went there in 1849, 1850, and 1851; consequently, the "'49'ers" and the early pioneers have always been exclusive and careful in affiliating with later arrivals. It was the sterling element drawn from the better families of the country that gave California the power to govern herself in many trying emergencies. . . .

Seeing the confusion that was daily increasing in the train and realizing that their chances for reaching California by that route were small, the two friends (McDonald and Swift) with Mr. Sloss determined to leave. When about two hundred fifty miles from Omaha they, with their companion, Mr. Sloss, determined to purchase extra stock from emigrants on the road, and "pack" across to California. Our party had now three horses, and an opportunity now offered to increase the number to six (three for riding and three for packs); they had only two pack saddles, but for the third they built a very good substitute of sticks; their supplies they bought from the overloaded teams. Thus equipped they left the Turner and Allen Pioneer Train, and rapidly passed ahead of all team emigration, for it was much easier for pack horses to climb the steep grades and travel over the rugged ways than for any loaded vehicle on wheels. They started together through all the sufferings and perils of the long journey; together they entered Sacramento, together commenced business, and were in partnership for a year, and unbroken and unaltered their friendship continued from that time till now.

At their start the little band of three agreed that all disputed cases should be settled by two-thirds rule. About the time and place of starting, resting, and other matters, they like all travelers, would frequently differ, and would perhaps argue the point fiercely; but the question was invariably settled by applying the two-thirds rule, and whether or not satisfactory, the resulting decision was always accepted. In fact, most of their differences, as well as those occurring in general conversation as those bearing directly on methods of traveling, were finally settled by application of this rule.

\* These excerpts concerning the overland trail ride of Louis Sloss and his two companions are taken from *Richard Hayes McDonald* by Frank V. McDonald (University Press, Cambridge, 1881), pp. 63-75. (Limited edition of 150 copies.)

In crossing the South Platte, at a point where the river was very wide, they barely escaped with their lives. As it was early in the season, they found the water very high and flowing swiftly. In several places they were compelled to swim their animals, Mr. Sloss and Dr. McDonald who could not swim, holding on to their horses. They reached the other side by careful management, and with comparatively small sacrifice, but many who followed them lost, not only their teams, but members of their families, and in some cases all in the party were swept down stream and drowned. When they reached the North Platte they found the waters swollen unusually high by the fast-melting snows and the recent warm rains. The ford was in a narrow, deep, and turbulent part of the stream, which had not even subsided from the effect of the Spring freshets. It was useless to attempt their customary mode of passing, and they had almost decided to go up the river in search of a more favorable place, when Mr. Swift, an excellent swimmer, determined to try and take the animals and packs across by swimming and guiding them. With considerable difficulty Mr. Sloss and Dr. McDonald drove the horses in, for neither of the two could swim and Mr. Swift, seizing the tail of the first horse, led the way. The current in the middle, however, proved too rapid and resisted all efforts to cross. The horses were carried back to the same bank from which they had started; Mr. Swift lost his hold, was caught in the rushing eddies and so whirled about that he was unable to swim, but fortunately drifted on some rocks in the river, where he rested, regained his strength and avoiding the current made his way back to shore. Realizing the impossibility of crossing at this point, they started up the river in search of another ford. Higher up they found a temporary bridge across a very narrow part of the river which a party crossing had built for their own convenience and had then converted into a toll bridge. Our party thankfully paid the reasonable charge and, with much less peace of mind concerning their future, continued their journey, turning their faces from the fertile valley of the Platte to the lofty passes of the Rocky Mountains.

All the way from the Missouri River our three travelers had encountered tribes of Indians, had passed through their villages and their transient camping grounds, witnessed their modes of hunting and fishing, their various athletic sports, their ruses for decoying stray buffaloes and antelopes, with the latter of which the Plains abound even today, and for trapping smaller game. Before reaching California they were given ample opportunity for familiarizing themselves with the manners and customs, the character and characteristics of the Indian.

One of the mistakes of the thousands who left their Eastern homes for California, the first year, was the universal overloading of the teams. While on the level plain the burden did not press so heavily; the roads were fair; the grass good and abundant; and water within easy reach, so that their stock could stand it; but on reaching the mountains where the road was steep and rugged, water and forage scarce, the long marches necessary, they found it impossible for their overloaded teams to proceed and were obliged to lighten them. First, they dispensed with all luxuries, then they remembered that "half a loaf is better than none" and often were forced to the final conclusion that they would do well to get through with their lives.

The goods thus discarded by the emigrants strewed the way for hundreds of

miles and every variety of article was to be found among them; in one place furniture and household ornaments; in another a barrel of flour; in another canned meats and bacon; here a fine selection of books; there cooking utensils and stoves. In nearly every case they were neatly arranged by the roadside and often labeled—"Overloaded and compelled to throw away," "Take all you can carry," "Help yourself to all you want and leave the rest for others," "Could not carry, help yourself"; or simply "Help yourself." The passers-by made judicious exchanges or additions to their loads from these abandoned goods thus pressed on their attention; often only to leave them in their turn on the dreary Humboldt Plains, or even before they reached that distant place.

Many thought that if they could cross the Rockies and reach the table-land on the other side, all would be well; but they knew little of the dreary deserts before them and, worst of all, of the terrible sand wastes of the Humboldt Valley where every step sank more than ankle deep in the hot alkaline sand and where it was necessary to go at times two days without water and without food for the stock. When this district was reached the emigrants found it necessary in many cases not only to throw away everything in the wagons but to double up teams and take through a few of the best wagons, or even to abandon them entirely and pack on the horses. In places, to reach camp they would have to travel all day and all night. Many who had bravely borne all the trying days of hardship before reaching the Humboldt Desert would look in utter despair over that final waste, which lay just on the borders of their long sought for goal.

Those who did cross the sands in the first year of emigration lay down at night so worn, so heartsick and despairing that they little cared what the morrow might bring. Death had no terror for them, indeed it would have been almost welcome. Many times as they toiled through the desert, danger from hostile Indians threatened them but their only thought was, "Well, what of it? As well die one way as another." . . . .

They reached the wells, a long day's journey; the pack animals were unusually thirsty and in their eagerness to drink rushed furiously to the brink. Dr. McDonald's "White Cloud," in his haste, put his feet in the water and finding no bottom shot down (into) the hole, and would have drowned had not his packs caught on the edge and held him. He hung suspended, all but his hind feet under water. Dr. McDonald and his companions tried to pull him out, but must have failed if a number of emigrants just passing had not offered instant aid. The horse was drawn out unconscious and to all appearances dead; but after taking off his packs, rolling the water out of his mouth, ears and nostrils, and inducing artificial respiration he gave signs of returning animation and in the course of half an hour was strong enough to clamber on to his feet and eat before being repacked. Not until the following day, however, was he able to carry his usual load. By this time the animals had become weak and thin, and like their owners were only just able to drag themselves along.

On the Humboldt they also came on some Hot Springs where they spent the night. There were a great number of these springs, some of them hissing with escaping steam; over the steam they boiled their coffee, for the heat was sufficient for that

purpose, the temperature being about 200°F. The water though warm was palatable (pond) but was strongly infused with nitrate of potash which had a painful effect on the kidneys and urinary organs that did not wear away until the following day. The march from the last camping ground to those springs was very long; men and animals became very thirsty.

The Humboldt flows into a wide lake about which little is known. The lake spreads over vast surface in Winter and Spring but its bed is very much contracted in Summer. So far as ascertained it has no outlet, although it has been asserted that the water flows through an underground channel to the Ocean. However, this may be, it is known by the name of "Humboldt Sink." At this point Dr. McDonald and his companions bore to the right, bade a thankful farewell to the never-to-be-forgotten Humboldt Desert, and crossed the Sierra Nevada Mountains to the beautiful Truckee River.

At one of the crossings of the Truckee they met a man who had succeeded in bringing his library in safety all the way over the Plains; but in fording this place the current had swept everything down stream, crushing the team and ruining all it contained. The man barely saved his own life; he was seated on the bank drying his books, quite a number of which he had fished out. In this same place a man was drowned the day before but our travelers, after much exertion, reached the opposite shore in safety.

On reaching the picturesque Donner Lake they turned aside from the regular trail into the grove at some little distance to examine the place where the Donner family had suffered that awful winter, where all but one of those that had stayed behind had perished. The bones of the unfortunates lay bleaching around the cabin, the skeletons yet continuous in their parts. They were perhaps the first visitors to that place that year and no one had in any way disturbed the landmarks of the catastrophe; the trees were yet barked and showed the height of the snow, and the stumps above which the trees had been felled spoke more plainly of the depths to which it fell over the captives.

From here they entered California and kept on their way to Sacramento. They left the summits of the big mountains and came down into "steep hollow" near Nevada City, California, on the 18th of July 1849, which date Dr. McDonald celebrates as the anniversary of his arrival in California. He was within the present State limits several days before this but on this day he met the emigration from the Pacific side, and first saw the process of washing gold.

The road leading from the mountaintop into "steep hollow" was nearly a mile in length and portions of the track were almost perpendicular. It was only with the greatest difficulty they could get down. Some few of the earliest teams ever had accomplished the descent by unhitching the wagons and letting them down by means of rope passed around the trees, or "cordeling" them down, to use a local expression. A number of the trees were barked and showed how ingeniously the ropes had been passed from one station to another.

At the base of this mountain was a camp of miners with their old-fashioned rockers, working zealously to wash out gold.



For the first time since leaving the Missouri River our party found themselves without flour or bread; heretofore the supplies abandoned along the wayside had furnished them with more than they could use. In their need they applied to the miners and were informed that none was for sale, but to meet their necessities a portion of a small lot of biscuits just arrived from Sacramento by pack mules, and intended for use at the camp, would be given up at one dollar per pound. This enormous price overwhelmed our travelers but finding that they should have no other opportunity of supplying themselves, and that the offer was really a kindness rather than an attempt at extortion, they purchased barely enough to last until they should reach their journey's end. They afterwards learned that the price was lower than they might have had reason to expect.

Their journey from here was through a series of mining camps until they reached the flats of the American River in the vicinity of Sacramento. At their long journey's end they stopped at Norris' ranch, on the other side of the American River, where they made their camp fires, picketed their stock in good grass, and waited a few days before moving in to Sacramento.

They hired a little one horse wagon to take them and their effects into the city. It was, of course, necessary to ford the American River and provision had been made for this but they had forgotten to calculate for the rise of water due to the influence of pressure from the tidewater at San Francisco Bay, which at that time made a difference of from one to two feet; as it happened, they crossed at high tide. All their personal effects were carefully placed at the bottom of the wagon, among them a half dozen new and elegantly finished shirts which Dr. McDonald had brought, with much care, all the way across the plains, as he was anxious to wear a white standup "stake and rider" shirt when he should once again be within the borders of civilization. In the middle of the ford the river, it was noticed, had risen nearly to the top of the wagon bed; and muddy yellow river water had drenched and ruined the Doctor's shirts, which catastrophe brought him to the level of all other flannel-shirted gentlemen. It was a most unpleasant surprise to him but a cause of much merriment to his companions, to whom he had confided his prospective grandeur, and who now enjoyed his discomfiture. When however he reminded them there were enough for two apiece, they acknowledged the common loss but all concluded that ungratified vanity should not be allowed to cloud the happiness they felt at reaching their journey's end.

On arriving in Sacramento they stopped at the corner of 6th and I Streets, built their camp fires and entered into an agreement to transact in partnership whatever business they could decide upon as the most advantageous.

On taking inventory of cash and stock on hand it was found that Mr. Swift's means formed nearly nine-tenths of the whole amount.

Dr. McDonald after leaving the train, and after the additional animals had been purchased, had \$180.00; about \$80.00 of which was in ten cent pieces, as he anticipated a scarcity of small change in California.

Mr. Sloss had a little less than Dr. McDonald, but Mr. Swift had \$2,200.00 in gold, all English sovereigns, a weight of nearly 10 pounds avoirdupois. This package

had been a most troublesome burden during their journey. The heavy mass shifting, concentrated, dead in weight, had tired man and beast; and in a number of instances, especially on the Humboldt Desert, they almost decided to leave it. It was carried first by one animal, then another, then borne by each of the party in turn; for this burden, as all others, was willingly shared by the friends.

With a capital of about \$2,500.00, in which each was to share equally, they sought an opening for their energies.

Sacramento, which was on General Sutter's Claim, was laid out in blocks and lots but contained only one wooden building which was about half finished; all other dwelling places were in tents. There were from fifteen to twenty thousand people already there and the number was fast increasing, as this was the nearest starting point to the mines.

The furnishing of miners' outfits seeming to offer our party the best business opening, they prepared for that. They rented a seven foot space between two tents, one of which was used for a store, conducted by Job Watson of Providence, R.I.; the other was occupied by a man named Peck, as a residence. The store of Watson was mainly used for bottling liquor from casks, boxing the bottles and shipping them to the mines.

The walls of the two tent buildings served as walls for our party's tent, and a piece of canvas across the top completed the shell. In front they erected uncovered scantling, leaving a doorway for entrance and exit on one side. The tailboard of a wagon made a shelf or counter in front, on which they placed a pair of gold scales for weighing the gold dust payments. Just inside they put an old Dutch trunk they had purchased from an emigrant, which was firmly secured with iron bands, hasp and padlock. Sixty feet back, in the rear of their store, they bought a vacant lot on which they stacked hay and feed for stock.

At the back of their tent, by the stump of a large oak tree that had been recently felled, they built their fire and did their cooking; and in the rear of this, by their hay stacks, they spread their blankets, sleeping during the entire Fall until the rains set in, in the open air. Around this hay stack the animals in which they were dealing were tied and fed. Thus they commenced their partnership dealing in horses, mules, oxen, milch cows, wagons, harness and almost everything required by emigrants and miners.

Here was the auction place for this class of property and it was sought for by emigrants from over land and sea. The scenes enacted were among the most stirring Dr. McDonald remembers having witnessed. Nearly every new arrival on the Coast had something he wished to dispose of, and this became the rendezvous for exchanging, selling or, in some instances, giving away.

It is easy to understand that the number of transactions gone through with in the course of a day was exceptionally large. During the business hours the numerous offers and demands made a babel like confusion. Half a dozen auctioneers would be riding their animals up and down at once, praising their qualities and in their haste omitting mention of their bad ones; while as many other would-be sellers, mounted on boxes, wagons, stumps or men's shoulders called attention to other dis-

positional effects. Everybody was eager and hurried, and all business was transacted with incredible rapidity. The peculiar character of the horse market is something that has never been forgotten by the older Californians.

Dr. McDonald and his partners found themselves in the very midst of this din and tumult, alternately buying and selling. The greater number of their transactions were made, however, by private negotiations with parties just arrived in the city. They went about among the different companies coming or going and bought or exchanged commodities, or helped fit out for their journey the prospective miners, most of whom were feverishly impatient to reach the "Golden Sands," which proved quicksands to so many.

As an evidence of the exceptionally large profits to be legitimately realized at times, the following incident from Dr. McDonald's experience may not be uninteresting:

He was approached by a new arrival who was short of funds and very impatient to reach the mountains and the mines. He had a large handsome mule in moderately good condition and ready for service, although just from crossing the Plains. Dr. McDonald having just furnished a lot of stock was not desirous of buying, but to satisfy the man's insistent demands made him an offer of \$50.00, not expecting it would be accepted as it must have been less than half of the original cost of the animal. The man, however, was determined to sell then and there, so he took the money, joined his friends and left. The enclosure for stock was full so the animal was fastened where he was; in the course of an hour a man came along in search of just such a mule, so Dr. McDonald showed him the new purchase. The animal was examined, ridden around to try his gait, declared satisfactory and the lowest cash price asked for; after some hesitation this was fixed at \$350.00. The man offered \$300.00, Dr. McDonald insisted on \$325.00; after some discussion they compromised and the sale was effected for \$312.50.

These two transactions occurred within two or three hours. In this way business was done at that time, to a very large extent, for the new arrivals were so impatient to reach the mines, become rich and return that they were willing to abandon whatever they could not sell at once.

It was no uncommon thing to buy from a company its entire train of oxen, wagons, and teams of horses which would afterwards be disposed of separately or in small lots. The usual rate of profit in such transactions was 100 per cent. They also made large sales at auction; thus frequently they did business amounting to thousands of dollars a day.

The labor was equally divided among the partners, each assuming the duties which by taste or training he was best fitted to perform. Mr. Sloss was auctioneer, Dr. McDonald was the buyer, and Mr. Swift was business manager, taking charge of the store, looking after details, keeping the accounts, and generally overseeing and directing.

The partnership was, as may be supposed, a most harmonious one and the business thus conducted proved very remunerative, enabling them to divide the large amount of \$17,000.00 in seven weeks. The profits of the business, however, were at

this time larger than at any subsequent period, and even for the time the success of Dr. McDonald and his friends was exceptional.

The heavy rains now coming on, they were obliged to suspend operations for the season; but they decided, on careful consideration, that their business would be a good one for another year although the returns would probably be considerably smaller and therefore they immediately commenced to make extensive preparations for the Spring trade. They made a joint investment in animals (horses, mules and cattle) which were then arriving in great quantities in the numerous trains over the Plains. Few of the emigrants stopped in the mines; the season was too far advanced and Sacramento and the lowland valleys were their objective points. With the return of Spring they would seek their fortune in the "diggings."

The stock of these emigrant trains, being in poor condition after the transit, could be secured at very low prices; good oxen from \$35.00 to \$40.00 a yoke, good horses from \$35.00 to \$50.00 a team, and inferior animals could be had almost for the asking.

As soon as purchased, the stock was sent to a good ranch above Sacramento City, in the Valley, where excellent grass and water were abundant. They were to be kept for one dollar a month per head until they should be required in the Spring, when they would be in fine condition and ready for use.

With the exception of a small amount expended for necessary articles of outfit, they invested all of their earnings in live stock. They had, however, omitted one important factor from their calculations—they knew nothing of the great California floods; swollen by the rains of the Valleys and the melting snow of the mountains, the waters rush down in torrents; the rivers rise from fifteen to twenty feet, the bottom lands are flooded and all but the bluffs of the American and Sacramento River Valleys submerged.

Sacramento City was then on a bluff and the River flowed far below, in no respect a source of danger, even when at its highest. The mountains, however, which the miners soon washed into the rivers, filled up the channels, changed the course of the water and brought upon the City the calamities which deprived it of its first rank and drove its business men and capitalists, one by one, to San Francisco.

To the three friends this winter's flood brought surprise and disaster; it swept away their stock and destroyed all their earnings, leaving them worse off financially than when they arrived in California.

They knew that another year would materially decrease the profits to be realized from the business, as too many were entering into it, and their stock having been destroyed, their preparations for a second year of partnership were useless, so the partnership was dissolved by mutual consent with the friendliest of feeling, with the pleasantest memories of their long and intimate companionship; each thereafter to follow the dictates of his own judgment and occupy his time as inclination should direct or opportunity offer.

Dr. McDonald and Mr. Sloss purchased an adjoining tent and there spent the winter. Mr. Swift boarded.

## HOUSE IN SACRAMENTO

Sloss house in Sacramento was a double brick house, corner of Fourth and M Streets, afterwards was lived in by Locke and Levinson. The Sloss family were living at the corner of M and 4th Streets in Sacramento at the time of the flood in 1861 and from the bedroom windows were taken in row boats to a steamer and brought to the Stockton Hotel, Sansome Street, San Francisco. The family at that time comprised Mr. and Mrs. Louis Sloss, Bella, Leon, and Louis, Jr.

## CALIFORNIA MOURNS HER BEST CITIZEN\*

A noble, a kindly and gentle soul was called from earth when Louis Sloss passed away. The joy of his family, the pride of his race, the honor of his city, the well-beloved, the highest, purest, ablest, best type of man; yet withal a soft and winning man was Louis Sloss. He forgave those that trespassed against him and did good to those that despitefully used him. His charity was as broad as his toleration, which was universal; his thoughtful kindness was like a mother's love. As brave a man as ever lived, there was no trace of bitterness in his character, but, oh, how scornful he could be of cowardice, oppression and meanness.

Louis Sloss was a shrewd far-sighted and courageous merchant, able and willing to match his skill in commerce with any captain of industry and likely to be victor in the conflict, yet all men honored him and spoke well of him. Let the young man who is anxious to acquire great wealth ponder on the secret of Louis Sloss' life—the making of himself richer without making others poorer.

He envied the possessions of no man; he saw the wealth in the waste places of the earth and went forth to take some of it. Louis Sloss as a trader was always miles ahead of the frontier. He was a pioneer in California, Nevada, Arizona, Greenland, Siberia and Alaska, and, better than William Penn, he traded with Indians without cheating them. When he made the venturesome fur contract for the seal islands and found what was thought to be a foolish risk was a splendid investment, he allowed his friends to share in his good fortune. He took care to see that the Aleuts on the islands got their full share, and more. He built them schools, hospitals and churches of the faith that they had got from the Russians, and made them happy and contented. When he found that lack of protection to seal life was thinning out the herds, he did all in his power and spent much money to help enforce America's claims against British pelagic sealing, despite the fact that the seal concession was at that time and would be for twenty years in the hands of trade rivals who had secured the lease by bidding for it more than Louis Sloss thought it was worth. When asked why he helped a rival he said, "Oh, I'm an American, too."

Louis Sloss was a brave man, brave even about money that makes nearly all merchants cowards. When the agent of the Central Pacific threatened to extort an unjust freight rate from him, Louis Sloss put the fellow out of his office, chartered a steamer and sent his skins to London by way of Magellan's straits. It cost much in

\* Editorial in San Francisco newspaper.

money and enmity to do that thing, but he thought it his duty as a man to resent corporation tyranny, and he did his duty as he saw it.

One instance of his great charity and his way of doing it may be given. An old couple living on a small farm in the mountains were threatened with dispossession because they were unable to pay off the mortgage. The wife wrote a letter to a man in San Francisco, asking him to try and get someone to lend the money on the security of the farm. She told of her own hard life, how she had toiled early and late, how her husband had worked, of successive bad crops and the awful almshouse staring them in the face. The letter was taken to Louis Sloss, with the request that he ask one of the banks in which he was interested to grant the loan. His eyes were moist when he finished. Going to a drawer, he took out the needed sum in gold, saying: "If you find the case as stated, pay off the mortgage and burn it up. If they ever get rich they can pay me back, but I think they will feel better with no encumbrance on the little place."

The lesson of Louis Sloss' life is so plain that all can read. We sincerely trust that it will influence the lives of all the young men of California. His life shows that one may accumulate wealth without being cowardly, mean or avaricious. One may get rich and yet be honored and loved by all his neighbors. If Louis Sloss had been in great need to make money, and to get it had done mean things in his early life, his declining years would not have been blessed with the happiness and richness of life that are God's greatest and best gifts to man.

California mourns the loss of her best citizen—a big word that surely was proven in that no man will challenge its truth.

#### SOCIETY OF CALIFORNIA PIONEERS\*

It is difficult for a member of the family which still regards him as its head to speak of his character and personality—to attempt to say what manner of man he was. I take the liberty, therefore, of quoting from an article published in a leading San Francisco journal on the day when he was laid to his last rest. The sentences which I shall read express sentiments which I could hardly venture to utter on my own authority. The article said, among other things:

A noble, a kindly and gentle soul was called from earth when Louis Sloss passed away.

He envied the possessions of no man; he saw the wealth in the waste places of the earth and went forth to take some of it. Louis Sloss as a trader was always miles ahead of the frontier. He was a pioneer in California, Nevada, Siberia, and Alaska, and, better than William Penn, he traded with Indians without cheating them.

We sincerely trust that his life will influence the lives of all of the young men of California. If Louis Sloss had been in great haste to make money, and to get it had done mean things in his early life, his declining years would not have been blessed with the happiness and serenity that are God's greatest and best gifts to man.†

Almost thirty years have passed since these words were written. The beautiful tribute of this evening shows that after the lapse of a generation he has not been

\* From address of M. C. Sloss, October 15, 1931, on occasion of a celebration in honor of his father, Louis Sloss, by the Society of California Pioneers.

† The entire editorial is quoted above, p. 172.

forgotten and that Californians of today still reverence and admire his qualities and the things for which he stood. With hearts full of grateful recognition, we, the members of his family, express to the President, the Directors, and the members of the Society of California Pioneers, our deepest thanks for the honor you have shown to the memory of him whom we love and revere.

## SARAH SLOSS

WORDS SPOKEN BY RABBI MARTIN A. MEYER

AT THE FUNERAL OF MRS. SARAH SLOSS

Rarely when a name is bestowed upon a child is thought given to its meaning. Still rarer are those occasions when a name thus bestowed becomes the index of a life and a character. Yet in the case of our dear friend—to honor whose life we have gathered at this sad hour—she bore a name which most suitably represented her noble life.

Sarah she was well called for she was a princess in every truth. She possessed those qualities of heart and soul which we associate with the true prince. None who came into her presence and was permitted to see the richness of her heart and soul but immediately knew that one of God's gentlewomen was in his company.

She had the generosity of the blood. Not only was her purse generously at the disposal of the needy, not only did she have that heaven-sent gift of beautiful giving, but she offered herself; her heart went with her means. One went from her presence rich with the material gift, but richer still with the gift of her own fine interest and no less fine self. It was understanding generosity, not a mere vaporous inability to say "no," but an appreciation of the human cause that needed aid and comfort. Nor did she wait to be cajoled into giving. Her heart went out to meet the occasion like a gracious host who hastens to welcome the guest to his home. No human cry ever went unheeded, no human need unanswered, for the true princess feels instinctively the wants of sad hearts or weary bodies.

And the princess soul is loyal. It follows its standards, even to the death. It is magnificent in its devotion to its ideals even though they be the ideals of a lost cause. It despises self-seeking at the cost of principle. Sarah Sloss was loyal to her lights, loyal to her ideals of the good, the beautiful, and the true. She understood the obligations of her fortunate position in the world. Nothing that was noble in humanity was alien to her. She gave herself to its advancement; she stood ready to do so that the best in life might prosper. She stood loyally by her faith. She had been reared beneath its broad and welcome shade; she found peace in its tenets and its practice; and when the days grew dark, she found strength in her magnificent resignation. Adversity tries many; but prosperity is the rarer test. She met that test by reason of her loyal soul, not the loyalty of blind pursuit but the higher loyalty of loving understanding and appreciation, when the days grew dark. We can never forget that tragic figure from whose lips the smile never departed. Her soul spoke through that smile, spoke of faith and courage and insight. Mayhap it was her blessed fortune in the darkness to see what our eyes were denied the privilege of beholding, like

astronomers who betake themselves to the darkness of the cave at midday so that they might behold the glory of the never-failing stars.

But such faith and loyalty, friends, is the child of courage, the courage of a princely heart. "To smile when the heart is breaking," to hold the head high when the storms blow cold and keen, to keep eyes front and step out firm and sure—what can we ask of mortal to indicate the godlike strength of his soul? Life had given her so much that was beautiful and good; it tried her sore too when it is most difficult to be tried when the snows of the years were heaping high, and men look for peace and rest. Young hearts have resiliency; and despite her three score and ten she proved a heart as young and buoyant as the youngest of us who faces life. She held her banner high and with unflinching spirit accepted the bitter with the sweet; and tasting, found it good.

What she gave you, her children and her children's children, you cannot, you dare not lose. It is surely heart of your heart, and soul of your soul. May you never be so untrue to her dear memory, to her sweet life, to your own best selves as to surrender even a jot or a tittle of what she put into your lives. A mother is the heart of living; she holds her flock together by ties stronger than blood, by love and affection, by faith and encouragement. Day by day you made your own hearts glad and the deepening shadows bright for her by your tender and affectionate companionship with her and with one another. May that bond not grow less, but stronger if it be possible, now that she is no more with you here on earth. May her enlightened eyes look down from on high and understand—for if the dead see, they see clearly—that her life was not in vain, that her gift was a gift for time and eternity. Beloved and honored in her lifetime, in death may she not be separated from you.

The great peace came to her on the Sabbath Day, the day of cessation from toil and trouble. An old legend says that they who depart on the holy day of rest go directly into Paradise. I am sure that there can be no doubt that a life such as hers merits the highest rewards. God grant that they be hers in their richest beauty. That day well nigh rounding out another year of mortal toil, she was of a surety born anew into life eternal.

We would thank God for the blessings of such a life for we feel that of a certainty through the windows of such souls we get our fleeting glimpses of the World Soul, from whom we come, to whom we return. May our faith and our love never be so poor but that we can penetrate the shadows which chill our hearts, and with hope and insight gladly see that somehow and somewhere, we shall meet these dear ones of ours again; till then with God be their rest.

Verily with the ancient master we may say of Sarah Sloss—"Many daughters have done excellently, but thou excellest them all."



MARCUS CAUFFMAN SLOSS

PRESIDENTIAL VISIT

In the book, *The Golden Banquet and Other Functions During Reception of President Theodore Roosevelt*, we read:

The Mayor appointed a committee of 200 and chose from every walk of official and private life men known for their public spirit and demonstrated ability and etc.

Beside the official family, which included Superior Judge M. C. Sloss, among the private citizens were E. R. Lilienthal and Leon Sloss.

The president arrived in San Francisco on May 12th, 1903, and after many ceremonies including dedication of the Dewey monument in Union Square, the Golden Banquet with 450 in attendance was held at the Palace Hotel, May 14th, 1903.

RESOLUTION ON JUDGE M. C. SLOSS' EIGHTIETH BIRTHDAY,  
BY JEWISH NATIONAL WELFARE FUND

Edgar Sinton read the following resolution in honor of Judge M. C. Sloss on his eightieth birthday, occurring February 28, 1949. The Board of Directors, on a motion duly made and seconded, unanimously approved the resolution and voted that it be recorded in the minutes of the board and an embossed copy transmitted to Judge Sloss.

It is most obvious to all those who know Judge M. C. Sloss and those who know of him that he typifies the person that each one of us would like to be.

This organization, the Jewish National Welfare Fund, owes him a particular debt of gratitude; he is one of its founders and served as its first president for nineteen years, from 1925 to 1944, and is now its honorary president. He has been its guide, mentor and inspiration since its inception more than twenty-four years ago.

This community is grateful to him for his leadership in all causes for the advancement and protection of Jewry.

Over and beyond this, we are grateful to him for his courtly consideration, his kindness, his forthrightness and his rare good judgment. We are grateful to the Almighty that Judge M. C. Sloss has been granted eighty years within which to serve his people and his country and that he will continue to serve for many years is our fervent prayer.

On this, his eightieth natal day, the directors of the Jewish National Welfare Fund, speaking for each one of its members tender their affectionate felicitations to him and wish him many happy returns of the day. San Francisco—28th Day of February, 1949.

## Dedication

That our children may tell to their children the story of our parents, as we have told it to them, we have assembled this book. The last honor we can give to our forebears is to record for our posterity those principles by which we have all endeavored to live and those virtues we have tried to imitate, that the good in the past may be an inheritance in the years ahead.

More than a hundred years ago our grandparents came to the United States of America, bringing with them a rich tradition of wise living; one hundred years ago our maternal grandfather rode into California; nearly one hundred years ago Ernest Reuben Lilienthal, our father, was born.

This is an American story, this is a California story to be published in the year of the California Centenary. Its publication is in gratitude for many blessings, for life in this country of religious freedom, for California and San Francisco.

BENJAMIN PHILIP LILIENTHAL  
CAROLINE LILIENTHAL ESBERG  
SAMUEL LILIENTHAL  
SARAH LILIENTHAL WIEL  
JOHN LEO LILIENTHAL

December 5, 1948