

*probably with 1852*

## LOUIS SLOSS.

By ARTHUR WILLIAM FOSTER.

Mr. Louis Sloss was born in Bavaria July 13, 1823. He came to the United States in 1845, and settled in Kentucky. He came across the plains, leaving early in 1849 with quite a large company. Cholera broke out soon after the start, and with Dr. R. H. McDonald and Judge C. H. Swift (two well known California pioneers) he left the party. The three made the trip, arriving in California in July, 1849. He settled in Sacramento, and, after some time spent in the mines, engaged in various business enterprises, and in 1852 established the firm of Louis Sloss & Co. in the wholesale grocery business. In 1861, after suffering from two disastrous fires and two serious floods which devastated Sacramento, he moved to San Francisco. Here he started in the stock brokerage business with his old associates (Lewis Gerstle and Simon Greenwald) under the same firm name of Louis Sloss & Co. A few years later the firm engaged in the hide, fur, wool, and leather business, and in 1868 the Alaska Commercial Company was organized, in which he was one of the leading spirits. He was particularly active and successful at this time in obtaining from the United States Government a lease of the Prydzof Islands in the Behring Sea, and the right to kill seals thereon for a period of twenty years from 1870. A similar privilege was obtained from the Russian Government for a like period on the Kommandorski group of islands, near the Siberian coast. These ventures

proved profitable, and were the beginning of his financial career. The development of Alaska, largely due to the broad-minded policy of the Alaska Commercial Company, found a strong advocate in him, who was ever mindful of the trials and privations of the prospector and pioneer, and both with advice and more material assistance he was always to the fore to lighten their burdens and help them on their way.

Although he never sought or held political office, his advice was often applied for and given in party matters, as well as his financial aid. He was for several terms Treasurer of the Republican State Central Committee, and was active in the councils of the party.

He was very earnest in his affection and work for the Society of California Pioneers. He was on the building committee for its new home on Fourth street, near Market, and was President of the society for one year from July, 1884.

He was appointed Treasurer of the University of California September, 1885, and had the custody of its funds uninterruptedly from that time until his death.

He was largely interested and prominently identified with a number of large commercial enterprises on the Pacific Coast, notable among which were the Alaska Packers' Association, he and his associates having at the time of the organization of this company the control and management of six large salmon canneries in Alaska, which now are part of the aforementioned organization; the Anglo-Nevada Assurance Corporation, which did a large fire and marine business, and of which company he was the first President.

He has also been interested in and assisted in the establishment of a large number of other mercantile enterprises, and has always stood ready to assist in undertakings calculated to redound to the benefit and glory of his city and State.

He married in Philadelphia in 1855. His surviving

family is a widow and five children—Mrs. E. R. Lilienthal, wife of the well known merchant of that name; Leon and Louis, Jr., who for some years have been connected with their father's various undertakings; Joseph, Treasurer of the Pacific Hardware & Steel Co., and M. C. Sloss, Judge of the Superior Court.

Mr. Sloss was one of the great men of California and of the whole country. A powerful force at all times in financial circles, he was always ready to subordinate private and personal interests to the welfare of the community, and he was, above all things, an enthusiastic lover of his adopted country and an eminently public-spirited citizen.