

## A UNIQUE AFFAIR.

### The Annual Gathering at Salisbury Beach—A Letter from Gen. Robert E. Lee.

The annual gathering at Salisbury Beach, just north of the mouth of the Merrimac River, took place on Thursday. It had its origin far back in the olden time, when the sturdy, industrious people of Salisbury, Mass., met annually on the beach to congratulate each other on the happy results of their labors for the season, and to return to Divine Providence their grateful thanks. The present was the one hundred and thirty-fourth annual gathering. Little by little the circle of hospitality has been widened to admit visitors and spectators from the surrounding towns, and in 1863 all limits were abolished and the "whole wide earth" was invited and welcomed. The number of persons present on Thursday is estimated variously between 15,000 and 30,000. It was not a festival; for there is even now little of mere amusement afforded, and not much mirth is manifested by anybody; it is emphatically a sober, social "gathering" of people habituated to come together spontaneously, not knowing or needing any special reason for coming. It is said that the gathering has never been once omitted. A most convincing proof of the antiquity of the occasion was to be noticed in the number of aged persons present; probably a majority was past the average limit of life.

Mr. D. J. ADAMS, of Newburyport, officiated as President of the day. After a brief congratulatory speech he presented Major BEN. PERLEY POORE, who made a merry and excellent address. Remarks were also made by Captain F. D. BURNHAM, Rev. Mr. CURRIER, of East Salisbury, J. L. COLBY, of the *Newburyport Herald*, and JONATHAN NASON, of Amesbury. Brief notes from the following-named gentlemen were read: General SHERIDAN, Governor CLAFLIN, Governor HOFFMAN, Governor CHAMBERLAIN, Mayor SHURTLEFF, of Boston, JOHN QUINCY ADAMS, Dr. GEO. B. LORING, and others. Last year General ROBERT E. LEE was invited, and sent a letter expressing his regret that he was unable to attend. This year also he was invited, and sent the following reply:

LEXINGTON, Va., Sept. 2, 1869.

DEAR SIR: Your letter of the 19th ult., inviting me to attend the Salisbury Beach Festival on the 15th inst. would have received an earlier answer had I been here on its arrival. Having been absent during the greater part of the college vacation, I have just returned to prepare for the resumption of studies, which will take place on the 16th inst. It will therefore not be within my power to attend your celebration, as my presence at Washington College will be necessary at that time. I beg that you will present my thanks to the Committee for their cordial invitation, and express to them my hope that the Festival this year may be attended by even more than the customary number of representatives, and be marked by greater enjoyment than has been experienced by the tens of thousands who have joined in its celebration for more than one hundred years.

With my grateful acknowledgments to you for your kind sentiments,

I am with much respect,

Your obedient servant,

R. E. LEE.

ISAAC HALE, Jr.

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