

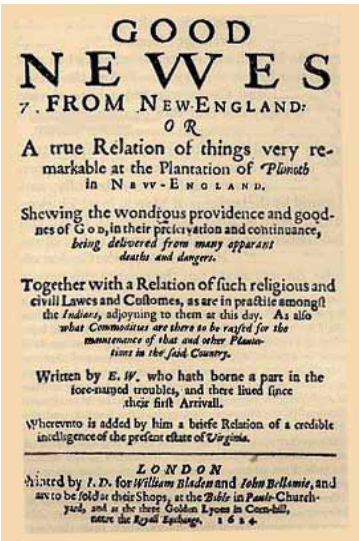
he were careful. Many, whilst we were there, came to see him; some, by their report, from a place not less than an hundred miles. To all that came one of his chief men related the manner of his sickness, how near he was spent, how amongst others his friends the English came to see him, and how suddenly they recovered him to this strength they saw, he being now able to sit upright of himself.



1888 Engraving by Henry N. Cady of Warren, RI

wam, and the isle of Capawack, were joined with them; himself also in his sickness was earnestly solicited, but he would neither join therein, nor give way to any of his. Therefore, as we respected the lives of our countrymen, and our own after-safety, he advised us to kill the men of Massachuset, who were the authors of this intended mischief. And whereas we were wont to say, we would not strike a stroke till they first began; “If,” said he, “upon this intelligence, they make that answer, tell them, when their countrymen at Wichaguscusset are killed, they being not able to defend themselves, that then it will be too late to recover their lives; nay, through the multitude of adversaries, they shall with great difficulty preserve their own; and therefore he counselled without delay to take away the principals, and then the plot would cease. With this he charged him thoroughly to acquaint me by the way, that I might inform the Governor thereof, at my first coming home. Being fitted for our return, we took our leave of him; who returned many thanks to our Governor, and also to ourselves for our labor and love; the like did all that were about him. So we departed.

This document is a reprint of all but the last three paragraphs of Chapter 4 from *Good Newes from New England, A True Relation of Things Very Remarkable at the Plantation of Plimoth in New England* by Edward Winslow, first published in 1624.



For more information about this and other events in 17th century New England centered on Sowams, the home of the Massasoit Ousamequin who first met the English Separatists in 1621, please visit:

SowamsHeritageArea.org

Massasoit’s Illness, and How Winslow Cured Him

By Edward Winslow (1595 - 1655)
[*Good Newes from New-England, 1624*]



(Engraved from a drawing made by PAUL ALTO PEIRCE, of Freetown.)

During the time that the Captain was at Manomet, news came to Plymouth that Massassowat was like to die, and that at the same time there was a Dutch ship driven so high on the shore by stress of weather, right before his dwelling, that till the tides increased she could not be got off. Now it being a commendable manner of the Indians, when any, especially of note, are dangerously sick, for all that profess friendship to them to visit them in their extremity, either in their persons, or else to send some acceptable persons to them; therefore it was thought meet, being a good and warrantable action, that as we had ever, professed friendship, so we should now maintain the same, by observing this their laudable custom; and the rather, because we desired to have some conference with the Dutch, not knowing when we should have so fit an opportunity. To that end, myself having formerly been there, and understanding in some measure the Dutch tongue, the Governor again laid this service upon myself, and fitted me with some cordials to administer to him; having one Master John Hamden,

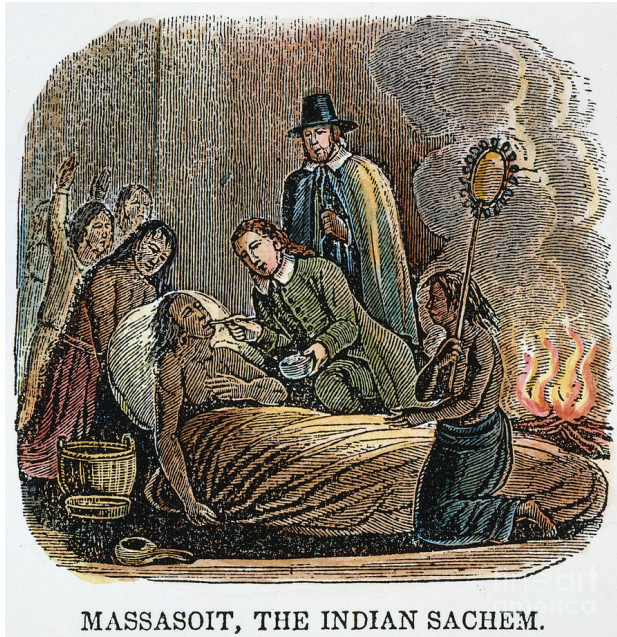
a gentleman of London, who then wintered with us, and desired much to see the country, for my consort, and Hobbamock for our guide. So we set forward, and lodged the first night at Namasket, where we had friendly entertainment.

The next day, about one of the clock, we came to a ferry in Conbatant’s country, where, upon discharge of my piece, divers Indians came to us from a house not far off. There they told us that Massassowat was dead, and that day buried; and that the Dutch would be gone before we could get thither, having hove off their ship already. This news struck us blank, but especially Hobbamock, who desired we might return with all speed. I told him I would first think of it. Considering now, that he being dead, Conbatant was the most like to succeed him, and that we were not above three miles from Mattapuyst, his dwelling-place, although he were but a hollow-hearted friend towards us, I thought no time so fit as this to enter into more friendly terms with him, and the rest of the sachems thereabout; hoping, through the blessing of God, it would be a means, in that unsettled state, to settle their affections towards us; and though it were somewhat dangerous, in respect of our personal safety, because myself and Hobbamock had been employed upon a service against him, which he might now fitly revenge; yet esteeming it the best means, leaving the event to God in his mercy, I resolved to put it in practice, if Master Hamden and Hobbamock durst attempt it with me; whom I found willing to that or any other course might tend to the general good. So we went towards Mattapuyst.

In the way, Hobbamock, manifesting a troubled spirit, brake forth into these speeches: “Neen womasu sagimus, neen womasu sagimus,” etc. “My loving sachem, my loving sachem! Many have I known, but never any like thee.” And turning him to me, said, whilst I lived, I should never see his like amongst the Indians; saying, he was no liar, he was not bloody and cruel, like other Indians; in anger and passion he was soon reclaimed; easy to be reconciled towards such as had offended him; ruled by reason in such measure as he would not scorn the advice of mean men; and that he governed his men better with few strokes, than others did with many; truly

loving where he loved; yea, he feared we had not a faithful friend left among the Indians; showing, how he oftentimes restrained their malice, etc., continuing a long speech, with such signs of lamentation and unfeigned sorrow, as it would have made the hardest heart relent.

At length we came to Mattapuyst. Here we inquired again concerning Massassowat; they thought him dead, but knew no certainty. Whereupon I hired one to go with all expedition to Puckanokick, that we might know the certainty thereof, and withal to acquaint Conbatant with our there being. About half an hour before sunsetting the messenger returned, and told us that he was not yet dead, though there was no hope we should find him living. Upon this we were much revived, and set forward with all speed, though it was late within night ere we got thither. About two of the clock that afternoon, the Dutchmen departed; so that in that respect our journey was frustrate.



When we came thither we found the house so full of men, as we could scarce get in, though they used their best diligence to make way for us. There were they in the midst of their charms for him, making such a hellish noise, as it distempered us that were well, and therefore unlike to ease him that was sick. About him were six or eight women, who chafed his arms, legs, and thighs, to keep heat in him. When they had made an end of their charming, one told him that his friends, the English, were come to see him. Having understanding left, but his sight was wholly gone, he asked who was come? They told him Winsnow, for they can not pronounce the letter l, but ordinarily n in the place thereof. He desired to speak with me. When I came to him, and they told him of it, he put forth his hand to me, which I took. Then he said twice, though very inwardly, “Keen Winsnow?” which is to say, “Art thou Winslow? I answered, “Ahhe,” that is, “Yes.” Then he doubled these words: “Mat-ta neen wonckanet namen, Winsnow!” that is to say, “O Winslow, I shall never see thee again.”

Then I called Hobbamock, and desired him to tell Massassowat, that the Governor, hearing of his sickness, was sorry for the same; and though, by reason of many businesses, he could not come himself, yet he sent me with such things for him as he thought most likely to do him good in this his extremity; and whereof if he pleased to take, I would presently give him; which he desired; and having a confection of many comfortable conserves, etc., on the point of my knife I gave him some, which I could scarce get through his teeth. When it was dissolved in his mouth, he swallowed the juice of it; whereat those that were about him much rejoiced, saying he had not swallowed any thing in two days before. Then I desired to see his mouth, which was exceedingly furred, and his tongue swelled in such a manner, as it was not possible for him to eat such meat as they had, his passage being stopped up. Then I washed his mouth and scraped his tongue, and got abundance of corruption out of the same. After which I gave him more of the confection, which he swallowed with more readiness. Then he desiring to drink, I dissolved some of it in water, and gave him thereof. Within half an hour this wrought a great alteration in him, in the eyes of all that beheld him. Presently after, his sight began to come to him, which gave him and us good encouragement.... Then I gave him more, and told him of a mishap we had by the way, in breaking a bottle of drink, which the Governor also sent him, saying if he would send any of his men to Patuxet, I would send for more of the same; also for chickens to make him broth, and for other things, which I knew were good for him; and would stay the return of his messenger, if he desired. This he took marvellous kindly, and appointed some, who were ready to go by two of the clock in the morning; against which time I made ready

a letter, declaring therein our good success, the state of his body, etc., desiring to send me such things as I sent for, and such physic as the surgeon durst administer to him.



He requested me, that the day following, I would take my piece, and kill him some fowl, and make him some English pottage, such as he had eaten at Plymouth; which I promised. After, his stomach coming to him, I must needs make him some without fowl, before I went abroad, which somewhat troubled me, being unaccustomed and unacquainted in such businesses, especially having nothing to make it comfortable, my consort being as ignorant as myself; but being we must do somewhat, I caused a woman to bruise some corn, and take the flour from it, and set over the grit, or broken corn, in a pipkin, for they have earthen pots of all sizes. When the day broke, we went out, it being now March, to seek herbs, but could not find any but strawberry leaves, of which I gathered a handful, and put into the same; and because I

had nothing to relish it, I went forth again, and pulled up a sassafras root, and sliced a piece thereof, and boiled it, till it had a good relish, and then took it out again. The broth being boiled, I strained it through my handkerchief, and gave him at least a pint, which he drank, and liked it very well. After this his sight mended more and more;.... insomuch as we with admiration blessed God for giving his blessing to such raw and ignorant means, making no doubt of his recovery, himself and all of them acknowledging us the instruments of his preservation.

That morning he caused me to spend in going from one to another amongst those that were sick in the town, requesting me to wash their mouths also, and give to each of them some of the same I gave him, saying they were good folk. This pains I took with willingness, though it were much offensive to me, not being accustomed with such poisonous saviors. After dinner he desired me to get him a goose or duck, and make him some pottage therewith, with as much speed as I could. So I took a man with me, and made a shot at a couple of ducks, some sixscore paces off, and killed one, at which he wondered. So we returned forthwith and dressed it, making more broth therewith, which he much desired. Never did I see a man so low brought, recover in that measure in so short a time. The fowl being extraordinary fat, I told Hobbamock I must take off the top thereof, saying it would make him very sick again if he did eat it. This he acquainted Massassowat therewith, who would not be persuaded to it, though I pressed it very much, showing the strength thereof, and the weakness of his stomach, which could not possibly bear it. Notwithstanding, he made a gross meal of it, and ate as much as would well have satisfied a man in health. About an hour after he began to be very sick, and straining very much, cast up the broth again; and in overstraining himself, began to bleed at the nose, and so continued the space of four hours. Then they all wished he had been ruled, concluding now he would die, which we much feared also. They asked me what I thought of him. I answered, his case was desperate, yet it might be it would save his life; for if it ceased in time, he would forthwith sleep and take rest, which was the principal thing he wanted. Not long after, his blood stayed, and he slept at least six or eight hours. When he awaked, I washed his face, and bathed and suppled his beard and nose with a linen cloth. But on a sudden he chopped his nose in the water, and drew up some therein, and sent it forth again with such violence, as he began to bleed afresh. Then they thought there was no hope; but we perceived it was but the tenderness of his nostril, and therefore told them I thought it would stay presently, as indeed it did.

The messengers were now returned; but finding his stomach come to him, he would not have the chickens killed, but kept them for breed. Neither durst we give him any physic, which was then sent, because his body was so much altered since our instructions; neither saw we any need, not doubting now of his recovery, if