

Weekly Chemawa American

VOL. 14

AUGUST 11, 1911

NOS. 4 and 5

Massasoit

Just about the time of the death of Powhatan in Virginia, the Pilgrims arrived at Plymouth and began plans for a settlement in that section. It was in the dead of winter, and recognizing the treachery of the Indians they took all precautions to shield themselves from harm from such a source. They felt that enmity of the savages would be the foremost barrier in the way of their colony's prosperity and permanent life. Consequently we can imagine their surprise when one day an Indian advanced from a number of his tribesmen and called in perfect English: "Welcome Englishmen!"

The native, Samoset by name, had picked up the words from certain Penobscot fishermen. He had come, he said, as a messenger from the great Indian king Mas-asoit, and had brought with him his royal master's assurance of peace and friendship.

At the time there were 20 tribes of Indians in New England. The most powerful of these tribes, the Narragansetts, were enemies of Massasoit and he was glad to make friends with the new settlers for that reason.

It was Captain Miles Standish, and

six others of the colonists who went to meet him. They made a treaty with Samoset in the name of Massasoit, and as representing Governor Carver. This agreement was unbroken for 50 years.

A short time afterwards, on March the 15, 1621, Massasoit himself, with 60 warriors, drew near the colony. Both were prepared for hostility should there be any treachery displayed at this meeting. Fortunately there was none, and Edward Winslow was delegated to present Massasoit with a number of presents. Winslow consented to remain behind as hostage for Massasoit's safety, while the king, and 20 of his men, went with Standish to a hut where Governor Carver waited to receive him.

The solemn treaty there enacted was the first diplomatic document recorded in New England. Massasoit never broke his word, and he helped the colonists with generous gifts of corn and meat.

As an illustration of how this treaty assisted the Indians is shown in the fact that nine years afterwards the Narragansetts went upon the warpath against Massasoit, and attacked him so vigorously that he was compelled to take refuge

(Continued on page 8.)