

## 6 AMERICAN SPIRIT IN EDUCATION

community, however small and poor, may be permitted to evade; that the government of the public schools in matters of detail is lodged not in some distant central authority but in the immediate neighborhood where the schools are situated; and that the elementary schools are distinct from the secondary schools which prepare for college or university.

Such promising beginnings, however, did not lead to rapid and continuous progress. Some towns found it cheaper to pay the fines imposed upon them for neglect of the law than to hire a schoolmaster and openly disregarded the ordinance of 1647. Many of the later immigrants to Massachusetts had less of that zeal for learning which distinguished the first settlers; and, being busy practical men engaged in trade or agriculture, they did not see the need of Latin for their children. Apart from these discouragements within, Indian raids on the backwoods settlements proved to be another obstacle to learning, the strength of which can readily be appreciated from the following pathetic petition from Dover, New Hampshire<sup>1</sup>:

That whereas the said town is one of the most exposed towns in this Province to the insults of the Indian enemy, and also whereas by an act of the General As-

<sup>1</sup> Walter H. Small, *Early New England Schools* (1914), p. 51.