

in the wrong direction, and was soon followed by others of the same kind.

Mr. Weeden calls the early part of the eighteenth century "the dark days" of New England in education and social culture." "Schools were half neglected in many districts; in a few they were totally neglected. The daughters of men holding important offices in town and church were obliged often to make a mark instead of writing their signature. Yet in many places there was a dame school, and women performed important functions in education." English grammar was a rare science.¹ Mr. Martin makes the more specific statement that "of women whose names appear in the recorded deeds of the early part of the eighteenth century, either as grantors of property or as relinquishing dower, something less than forty per cent sign their names; all the others make their mark."² Towards the close of the same century Mr. Weeden reports that Noah Webster's Spelling Book was just coming into use, with Webster's Selections, Morse's Geography, and the Youth's Preceptor. The Bible was the ground work of all reading. "The helps to the pupils being few in comparison with modern resources and methods, the self-help and reliance developed by this crude system of education was something remarkable."³

¹ *The Economic and Social Condition of New England, etc.*, p. 419.

² *The Evolution of the Massachusetts Public School System*, p. 75.

³ Reviewing the whole course of education in a typical Massachusetts town down to 1800, Mr. C. F. Adams has said: "In point of fact, the children were neither taught much, nor were they taught well; for through life the mass of them, while they could do little