

THE NEW ENGLAND QUARTERLY

Registered in the United States Patent Office

*An Historical Review of
New England Life and Letters*

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Volume IX Number 4
December, 1936

THE DEATH OF A MORMON DICTATOR

LETTERS OF MASSACHUSETTS MORMONS, 1843-1848

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THE following eleven letters and one apostolic blessing are interesting as throwing light on the middle period of the history of the rise of Mormonism. All except the sixth and the twelfth, which were addressed to her sons-in-law, were received by Abigail, daughter of Thomas and Catherine Harback, who was born in Grafton, Massachusetts, in 1790, married Calvin Hall in 1812, and died at Sutton, in Worcester County, in 1849, "of an unknown epidemic."¹ Mrs. Abigail (Harback) Hall had nine children, the first born in 1812 and the last in 1828. Of these nine children, two daughters married Mormon preachers. Martha S. Hall, who was born in 1819, became the wife of Jesse Haven, in November, 1842.

This Haven seems to have become a person of some importance in the Mormon church. In view of the contents of the letters printed below, it is a matter of interest to know that Jesse Haven defended polygamy in print as far away as the Cape of Good Hope.² One of the paragraphs in a pamphlet he published reads as follows:

That there has been a law revealed by which a man in Zion and in Zion only or at a place commanded by the Lord can have more than one wife, we by no means deny. This law was understood by the ancient Prophets Patriarchs and Apostles.

¹ William A. Benedict and Hiram A. Tracy, *A History of the Town of Sutton, Massachusetts* (Worcester, 1878), 655-658.

² The treasure room of the Harvard College Library contains a copy of an eight-page pamphlet bearing no place or date of publication, with the following title-page: "*Celestial Marriage and the Plurality of Wives*. By Jesse Haven, One of the Presidents of the Seventies of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints and President of the Mission at the Cape of Good Hope."