

Obituary.

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES.

The Autocrat has passed away at his residence at Beverley Farm, on October 7th, and the world is poorer for his loss. He was born at Cambridge, Mass., on August 26th, 1809. He graduated from Harvard in 1829, and commenced the study of law, but soon abandoned that for the more congenial study of medicine. He commenced the practice of his profession in Boston in 1836, and in 1838 was appointed professor of Anatomy and Physiology in Dartmouth College. This he resigned in 1847 to accept a similar position in the Massachusetts Medical School, from which he retired in 1882. But it is as a writer that he is best known the world over. As early as 1836 his poems appeared in various periodicals, and as a writer of songs and verses for festive occasions he was unsurpassed. In 1857 his "Autocrat of the Breakfast Table," appeared as a series of articles in the *Atlantic Monthly*, followed three months later by "The Professor at the Breakfast Table," and in 1872 by "The Poet at the Breakfast Table." His works, however, make too long a list to mention here. Collections of his poems have appeared from time to time, the last in 1889. Besides his literary efforts, he contributed largely to current medical literature. His greatest contribution to medicine was the discovery of the fact that puerperal fever is contagious, and this he maintained for years in the face of opposition and ridicule.

For thirty-five years he laboured at the Harvard Medical School, teaching at the one time anatomy, physiology and histology until 1871, when he became professor of anatomy alone. He used to say that he occupied not a *chair* but a *settee* of medicine in the school. He did much for his Alma Mater and it can truly be said of him that the world is better for his having lived.