

OCTOBER.

There was a large attendance of Fellows and visitors at the Royal Society meeting held on Tuesday, October 9th, in the Art Gallery, under the presidency of Sir Lambert Dobson. Apologies for absence were read from His Excellency the Governor, Hon. Sir James Wilson Agnew, K.C.M.G., M.D., M.E.C., and Mr. James Barnard. Messrs. B. T. Solly and L. Cockhead were elected Fellows.

A NEW METHOD OF DROPPING THE TIME BALL.

Mr. ROBERT HENRY, in reading a paper on "A new method of dropping the time ball," referred briefly to the existing means for letting Hobart know when it is supposed to be 1 o'clock. In his opinion, provided the arrangements were all in good working order, the present method should be effective. But to ensure absolute accuracy it was desirable that the process should be automatic as far as possible, and with this object in view he submitted a scheme for dropping the ball, and also firing the gun electrically. He described the details, and acknowledged indebtedness to Captain Parker, R.N., for the idea as to the manner for releasing the time ball. Various other appliances were in use, but this should commend itself for simplicity and inexpensiveness. The present mode of signalling the time throughout the colony gave all that was desired, and should not be disturbed, but the time ball arrangements should be separate and distinct. It would be more advantageous to use a special clock for the signalling instead of doing it by hand. Mr. Henry concluded his paper by conducting an interesting experiment, which consisted of firing a toy gun and dropping a model time ball by electricity, the Chairman applying the current.

Mr. KINGSMILL (Government Meteorologist) said that something more important than signalling was to first of all get the right time. Supposing the ball to be dropped and the gun fired electrically, if there was an error it would be brought home to him. There could be no third party. But he thought he was at liberty to mention that ere long there would be, through the generosity of a citizen, a better means of obtaining correct time than at present. Mr. David Barclay had very kindly placed his clock, known to be the best in the Southern Hemisphere, at disposal to be connected electrically with the Observatory. With liberty to read Mr. Barclay's clock alongside the present instrument in cloudy weather, when it was often and for lengthy periods impossible to take observations, a better standard of time might be looked for in the future. When this was done he would not be afraid to see electric signalling established.

PRIMITIVE THEORIES OF POLITICAL TEACHING.

Dr. W. JETHRO-BROWN, M.A., LL.D., read a paper on "Primitive Theories of Political Teaching," in which he attempted to answer the questions of what was the earliest theory of political duty, and at what stage in tribal history was the theory evolved?

Mr. MAULT and Rev. Dr. SCOTT expressed surprise that in his paper Dr. Jethro-Brown had not mentioned the patriarchal origin of authority.

Dr. JETHRO-BROWN, in reply, said that the point was one that had been very elaborately discussed in a large number of works. At present, so far as investigations went, the patriarchal theory, as far as the Aryan races were concerned, was better than any other advanced. But we must distinguish between theories of the origin of society and theories of the origin of political duty. Until we got beyond the family we could not have the idea of political duty.