

By such means it was determined that the year consisted, at least, nearly, of 365 days. The Egyptians, as we learn from Herodotus,¹³ claimed the honor of this discovery. The priests informed him, he says, "that the Egyptians were the first men who discovered the year, dividing it into twelve equal parts; and this they asserted that they discovered from the stars." Each of these parts or months consisted of 30 days, and they added 5 days more at the end of the year, "and thus the circle of the seasons come round." It seems, also, that the Jews, at an early period, had a similar reckoning of time, for the Deluge which continued 150 days (Gen. vii. 24), is stated to have lasted from the 17th day of the second month (Gen. vii. 11) to the 17th day of the seventh month (Gen. viii. 4), that is, 5 months of 30 days.

A year thus settled as a period of a certain number of days is called a *Civil Year*. It is one of the earliest discoverable institutions of States possessing any germ of civilization; and one of the earliest portions of human systematic knowledge is the discovery of the length of the civil year, so that it should agree with the natural year, or year of the seasons.

Sect. 3.—Correction of the Civil Year. (Julian Calendar.)

IN reality, by such a mode of reckoning as we have described, the circle of the seasons would not come round exactly. The real length of the year is very nearly 365 days and a quarter. If a year of 365 days were used, in four years the year would begin a day too soon, when considered with reference to the sun and stars; and in 60 years it would begin 15 days too soon: a quantity perceptible to the loosest degree of attention. The civil year would be found not to coincide with the year of the seasons; the beginning of the former would take place at different periods of the latter; it would *wander* into various seasons, instead of remaining fixed to the same season; the term *year*, and any number of years, would become ambiguous: some correction, at least some comparison, would be requisite.

We do not know by whom the insufficiency of the year of 365 days was first discovered;¹⁴ we find this knowledge diffused among all civilized nations, and various artifices used in making the correction. The method which we employ, and which consists in reckoning an addi-

¹³ Ib. ii. 4.

¹⁴ Syncellus (*Chronographia*, p. 128) says that according to the legend, it was King Aseth who first added the 5 additional days to 360, for the year, in the eighteenth century, B. C.