

WHY THE YEAR 1800 IS NOT A LEAP YEAR.

THE civil year contains 365 days for three years running, which are called common years; to the fourth is added one day, which constitutes it a Bissextile or leap year. This arrangement of the civil year, which is followed by all Christian Nations, was made by Julius Cæsar about forty-four years before the Christian Æra, on the supposition that the natural or solar year consists of 365 days 6 hours; but as it only consists of 365 days 5 hours 48 minutes and 57 seconds, the civil or Julian year had gained ten days on the solar year between the time of the Nicene Council in 225, & the time of Pope Gregorius the XIII. in 1582, thereby causing a great derangement in the time of the celebration of Easter, which that Council had fixed to take place on the first Sunday after the 14th day of the moon, happening on or after the 21st March; on which day the vernal equinox then fell. It was therefore ordered that after the 4th October 1582, ten days should be struck out of the calendar and the following day called the 15th instead of the 5th of the month; and in future that the leap years which took place every fourth year, should not take place in the year 1700, and that ever after three secular years should be common, and the 4th leap year. These salutary regulations were agreed to at first only in Catholic countries, and hence the difference of old and new stile; but in the year 1752, they were received and authorised in England by Act of Parliament, and it is in consequence of that Act, that the year 1800 is only reckoned a common year, and no leap year will take place till 1804.

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