

# A NEW ENGLISH DICTIONARY ON HISTORICAL PRINCIPLES.

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## DISBURDEN — DISOBSERVANT.

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BY

DR. JAMES A. H. MURRAY.

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### NOTE.

THIS Section contains 1396 Main words, 27 Combinations explained under these, and 127 Subordinate entries; 1550 in all. The *obvious combinations*, recorded and illustrated by quotations, without separate definition, number 20 more. Of the 1396 Main words, 926 are current and native or fully naturalized, 464 (33·3%) are marked (+) as *obsolete*, and only 6 as (||) *alien* or not fully naturalized. Comparison with the corresponding portion of Dr. Johnson's Dictionary, and of some more recent lexicographical works, shows the following figures:

	Johnson.	Cassell's 'Encyclopædic.'	'Century' Dict.	Funk's 'Standard.	Here.
Words recorded, <i>Disburden</i> to <i>Disobservant</i>	284	943	768	825	1569
Words illustrated by quotations	232	593	502	123	1450
Number of illustrative quotations	644	1017	1100	163	6990

The number of quotations in the corresponding portion of Richardson is 1005.

The words of Latin (or French) derivation in *Dis-*, which were entered upon in the preceding Section are here continued. They form an almost solid block, interrupted only by *Dish* (with its compounds and derivatives), which is the only word of Old English age included; and even this is originally from Latin, though adopted in West Germanic probably before the English conquest of Britain. Later representatives of the same Latin word are *dais*, *desk*, *disk*, and *discus*, the differentiation of which is noteworthy. The unusually large proportion of obsolete words confirms what has been pointed out before as to the classes of words that the language has discarded since the 12th century.

Of the *dis-* words interest attaches to the sense-history of *discipline*, *disclaim*, *discount*, *discover*, *discretion*, *disease*, *disgrace*, *disguise*, *dishabille*, *dishevel*, *dislocate*, with their related groups. But the most interesting word in these pages is *DISMAL*, the full history of which is here for the first time exhibited. Contemporary evidence shows this to have been originally the Anglo-French *dis mal* = L. *dies mali*, evil or ill-omened days, the 'Egyptian days' of the mediæval calendar; and it was so applied for more than three centuries. It is only as we come down near 1600 that we find other things than days characterized as 'dismal'; and when Minsheu, in 1617, derived the word from L. *dies malus* 'an euill and vnhappy time' (a derivation discarded by Dr. Trench as 'one of those plausible etymologies which one learns after a while to reject with contempt'), he was doubtless going upon the use of the word within his own memory.