

BLACK IS WHITE; AN ARGUMENT FROM ETYMOLOGY. -The word *black* (Anglo-Saxon *blac*, *blæc*, *bleak*,) is fundamentally the same as the Old German *blach*, now only to be found in two or three compounds, as *Blachfeld*, a level or plain; *Blachmahl*, the scum which floats on the top when silver is melted, and *Blachfrost*, and it meant originally "level," "bare," and was used to denote blackness, because blackness is (apparently) bare of color. But the nasalized form of *black* is *blank*, which also meant originally *bare*, and was used to denote whiteness, because whiteness is (apparently) bare of color. The same word was used to denote the two opposite things. From which it would seem that *black* is *white*. To any one who shall point out a flaw in this etymological argument I shall endeavor to be grateful, provided he does not disturb the very satisfactory conclusion. This I should naturally resent. It may help him to a conclusion and serve as a further support to my contention to point out that *blæc* in Anglo-Saxon actually means "white" as well as "black," so that it is not in its nasalized form only that the same word is employed to express opposite things. Why is this, unless that to the primitive mind both white and black appeared to agree in being bare or void of color, and for that reason to deserve the same name? And here I cannot help harboring a suspicion, suggested by the Old German *Blachfrost* (which appears to be nearly obsolete, or only used in some localities) that our "black frost" meant originally a frost bare of accompaniments, as hoar, rime, and it is a coincidence only that it should be black in color and blacken the vegetation. But we have long lost hold of the original meaning, and believe it to refer to the color.—*Notes and Queries*.

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