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Pow-Wows or Long Lost Friend

John George Hoffman

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[1820]Written by a Pennsylvania Dutch healer in the 1820s, this book is a rambling collection of rural home remedies and folk invocations. Pow-wow is a unique creole of Christian theology and a shamanistic belief system. It is still practiced in some rural areas of Pennsylvania. In spite of the name, it is not of Native American derivation. It is believed to have been brought over to America by German immigrants who practiced folk-magic.

This little book includes healing spells, binding spells, protective spells, talismans, wards and benedictions. As for the home remedies, we don’t recommend you try any of them (e.g., if you have scurvy we suggest that you get some limes. And if your livestock are sick, please have a veterinarian look at them.) The text is also of historical interest, as it paints a vivid picture of the miseries of rural American life in the early nineteenth century. The original is very rare.

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