

Fashionable "Fancy Work."

Every two or three years, a new variety of Ladies' Fancy work comes out sudden as a Wall street panic, fascinating as the furor for a new style of bonnet and contagious as the cholera. Those gifted with good memories, and who were not born since the "retiracy" of Van Buren from public life, can recal the day when scrap-boxes, scrap-tables, and other varieties of scrap furniture were the grand attraction, and when every lady ransacked every bookstore and entreated every friend for engravings to cut up with ruthless scissors. The finest steel plates, the most delicate etchings, the rarest wood cuts of the old and modern masters, were "exsected" with care from the paper on which they were printed and pasted on white wood boxes. There are instances on record of ladies who expended thousands of dollars in this manner on a single article of furniture, while Beau Brummel is said to have spent several hours a day for several years, on a scrap work screen.

Since those days, civilized society has seen several very different varieties of fancy work rise and fall. The worsted mania, with its "Berlin wools" of every imaginable shade, with its little red eyed dogs on cushions and its foxes heads on slippers which was once "all the go," is still a very important business to ladies who have presents to prepare for birth days and Christmases, or for fancy fairs. Of late indeed, there seems to have been a sort of revival in the fancy wool business—possibly owing to Mr. Secretary Guthrie's action the raw material—and we witness in many windows gaily colored patterns for it—most of them by a singular coincidence representing the head of a water dog holding a stick in his mouth.

Crotchet and leather work came in due time—like the Polka and Louis Napoleon—and were succeeded by the last and latest charming and fascinating business known by young ladies as poticho-manie or poticho-mania, vulgarly reversed and changed by some of their brothers into mania-a-potu. The popular explanation of the word is that it refers to a mania for working among pots of glass with innumerable varieties of pictures and prepared colors. But potichomanie when it seizes on a lady gifted with artistic taste, with an eye for colors, and with an "idea for arrangement" often produces truly exquisite results. As it consists for the most part of cutting out engravings and of gumming them to the interior of glass vases, it may appear that it is only a revived form of the scrap table mania. But as potichomanie confines itself principally to colored pictures made for the purpose, and does not destroy really valuable engravings, it may be regarded as a harmless and very often as a pretty and tasteful employment.

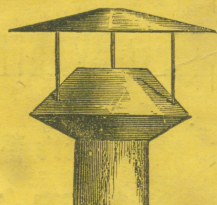
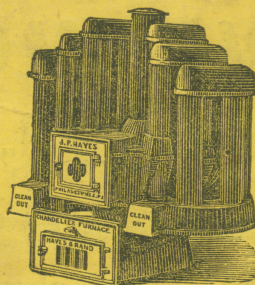
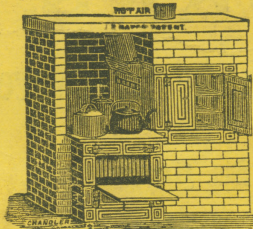
What the next fashionable fancy work mania is to be we know not. But the last which we have seen proposed, has beyond question, at least, novelty for merit so far as ladies are concerned. It is that those persons, old and young, whose time hangs heavy on their hands shall forthwith buy a small font of type and a few other little printing etceteras, and at once rush for amusement into typography. Not only can letters to friends be thus prepared in a very neat and curious form, but also invitations, and with them blank acceptances or regrets. Ladies and gentlemen who have never been able to win their way into the Poet's corner of the weeklies and monthlies can print their own effusions, and thus corner those blind and hypercritical editors who did not appreciate their merits.

We trust that this proposed new style of typographical mania for fancy work may become popular. Type and fixings will not

prove more expensive than many other follies, and those amongst lady readers who go over the daily paper without a thought as to the pains requisite to get it up, may possibly appreciate it a little more when they find out some of the labors which printers undergo—to say nothing of the portion taken therein by the editors. By all means try printing! Of course you will have to wash your hands after your work, but that is nothing more than you have to do after potichomanizing or leather work. Who wouldn't be an author when it can be done without the trouble of going round from bookseller to bookseller—a most tedious operation and not to be endured. Try the types, ye who seek for a new "fancy"—try the types!

L April 9, 1856.

RANGE, FURNACE, AND VENTILATING WAREHOUSE.



1854



HOT CORN BIDDY.



1854