THE GAMES AND AMUSEMENTS OF THE MONTH.

NOVEMBER.

THE very mention of November at once calls to mind the old rhyme about Guy Fawkes' Day, and one's first thoughts are of "Gunpowder Treason" and fireworks. Now it must be admitted that a good pyrotechnic display is a very pretty sight; and, moreover, that there is a lot of fun and amusement in letting off fireworks; and, still further, that it is very pleasant to feel that we ourselves have had a hand in making the squibs and crackers and set pieces which afford so much enjoyment to us and others; but notwithstanding all this, it doesn't do to manufacture fireworks, even for home use. Not only is it an excessively dangerous business, but it is forbidden by Act of Parliament, and offenders are liable to a heavy penalty. Therefore let those who want fireworks be wise enough to buy them ready-made. But after all—after all, are not fireworks a rather wasteful luxury, and might not the money we spend upon them be laid out to far greater advantage in obtaining healthful amusement for ourselves, and, much better still, in affording enjoyment to others? This may sound old fogeyish, but you may depend it is worth thinking about nevertheless.

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With November come the long, dark evenings, and stamp and crest collectors are busy once more. Now is the time, too, for preparing albums of photographic views and for making scrap-books for Christmas presents, and now you can commence to keep a commonplace book—that is to say, a book in which are pasted interesting cuttings from books, newspapers, journals, and magazines. It is astonishing how interesting a book of this sort can be made, especially if all the cuttings be grouped under distinctive headings, and if a complete index of them be made. Of course this is hardly the place in which to dilate upon the education afforded by the keeping of a commonplace book, but that it is not slight will be readily comprehended.

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In the long evenings, there may be a game of guessing, for which the players may dress in turn as the Mysterious Stranger, coming with stealthy strides into the room, wrapped in a black cloak, and with a hat pulled down over the forehead. This visitor in disguise sits on a chair in the middle of the circle, seeming to be thinking deeply, never speaking, and noticing no one till the others guess who he is. He is a well-known person of the past or present, famous for something of which he is thinking—Whittington and his Cat, Tell and his Apple, Columbus and America. The others talk about him, trying first to guess of what nation and time he is. His manner guides them—groans, weeping, head on hands, doleful shakes of the head, when they are wrong; joy, jumps, general delight when they are guessing well; of course his agonies return if they go wrong again. Whoever gives the final guess is the next Mysterious Stranger.

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We have all, at one time or another, essayed the "SIXTEEN PUZZLE," and many times have been disappointed at our failures to arrive at our expected success in placing the numbers. We have thought our time wasted, and it is with reference to this "waste of time" that a French writer has set down an ingenious plan whereby the player may ascertain whether the cubes of the puzzle will come out in order. The number will be easily arranged up to 13, but after that we find all the trouble in store.

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Let us take the fifteen cubes, and place them in the box at haphazard. Suppose they came out as follows:—

I.

12	4	15	1
7	11	8	3
5	14	10	9
2	13	6	

or as in the two other examples which follow:—

II.

2	1	5	4
3	6	9	10
12	15	8	7
11	13	14	

III.

7	15	11	8
13	6	1	3
10	14	2	5
12	9	4	

In these three cases, the third alone will come out right, because the cubes when made into like series will in two cases be odd, and in one case even. We

will endeavour to explain this, merely premising that we have devoted considerable time to these operations, and have always failed in the two cases I. and II., and at once succeeded with III.

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The practice is as follows:—We find in II.—which we take as an example, being an easy one—that the 2 is in place of 1, and 1 in place of 2, and nearly every figure occupies a place which is not its correct one. Now make a series and count the *different* numbers in it; thus, in problem II.:

1 is in place of 2 } = 2.
2 ,, ,, 1 }

5 ,, ,, 3 } = 2.
3 ,, ,, 5 }

4 is not counted, being in its own place.
6 ,, ,, ,,

9 is in place of 7 }
7 ,, ,, 12 } = 3.
12 ,, ,, 9 }

10 ,, ,, 8 }
8 ,, ,, 11 }
11 ,, ,, 13 } = 6.
13 ,, ,, 14 }
14 ,, ,, 15 }
15 ,, ,, 10 }

These series include all the cubes with the exception of 4 and 6, which remain unnoticed. It will be observed that we begin and follow up the numbers till we get round again, as it were, to the number at which we started. There are 4 series above; one is an odd number (3), so we will not consider it, the others are divisible by 2. Therefore they are *even numbers*, but *odd in number*, viz., three, and are counted.

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The RULE is when the number of *even* series is *odd* (as when there is 1 or 3, or 5 or 7) the problem will *not* come right. When the number of like series is *even* the problem *will* come right. In problem II. they are odd. In problem III. we shall find four series, two even, two uneven. Discard the uneven and single figures, and we find *two even series;* so problem III. will work out correctly, problem II. will not.

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"Lion Hunting" is best played in the house, while the evenings are still bright, but it can go on in the garden too, if there are places to hide. The player who is the lion takes three balls of crumpled paper about the size of apples, and goes and hides. Each of the hunters takes one paper ball, to represent shot, and they go in search. If a ball from the lion strike a hunter, the hunter is killed; but if there be many players it is well to make a rule that the lion must be shot twice before he falls. Balls thrown may, of course, be picked up and used again by either lion or hunters. The lion's best plan is to surprise the hunter from behind some door, or from overhead on the stairs; and, if it is not too loud, he may indulge in a roar or a growl. Two or three children play this game.

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For a merry but rather noisy game, the players sit in a circle all singing, "I'll do the best I can, to follow the hurdy-gurdy man." Each has chosen an instrument—flute, drum, bones, barrel-organ, and so on, and one is to dance. One player, the hurdy-gurdy man, stands in the middle, keeping time with his feet to the singing, and with his hands imitating the playing of various instruments. He beats the air for the drum, blows with his hands raised for the trumpet, shakes his fingers for the bones. So long as he keeps imitating one instrument, the player who has that instrument must imitate it too. The moment he changes that player stops, and another player is set going, or pays a forfeit for not "following the hurdy-gurdy man" at once. When he dances the dancer jumps up and dances too. The quickest of the players should take turns as the hurdy-gurdy man.

HOW MAGGIE FOUND HER BROTHER.

NOW for a race, father," said Maggie Frazer one morning. "I'll give you a start, and catch you before you get to the Wish Tower."

"I can't come just this moment, dear," answered Mr. Frazer; "have a scamper with Bruce first."

"Come along, doggie, then. One, two, three, and off we go. Gently," she added, patting her pony.

"Here we are, father," she exclaimed about five minutes afterwards, bringing Ruby to a standstill just as her father was preparing to mount his bicycle.

"I don't know who won—we always seem to keep just together; but Ruby shied at something in the hedge, and nearly threw me."

Mr. Frazer looked round quickly.

"You must be careful, Maggie, how you ride; what did you do with Ruby when she shied?"