

THE RETURN FROM THE VILLAGE FAIR - Eugène Lejeune (1818 – 1894)



A group of children on their way back from the village fair noisily disrupt farm life, shouting, playing the fife and drums, shaking a rattle, blowing a bugle, frightening the peasants and deafening the old farm-lady who has to cover her ears with her hands to cut out the din.

This playful scene exhibited at the 1866 Salon is a painting by Eugène Lejeune, a French artist who liked to depict children's games and quite often children's pranks. He is also known as a book illustrator.

The engraved version of the painting is published in the magazine "*L'Univers Illustré*" with the report of the exhibition.



It shows some differences with the painting: the boy on the left is playing the fife, whereas in the painting, he is waving his hat. And the toy on wheels that the boy with the bugle is pulling behind him has disappeared, and will never be seen again. But the position of the boy's hand will remain the same, as if he was still pulling something.

The fan follows the engraved version while suppressing some more elements: the 'vanishing process' concerns some figures and also the farmhouse buildings, only leaving a narrow expanse of wall wide enough to lodge the door.



Lejeune's painting is also reproduced on a trade-card. It is signed 'JM' and stamped "Lith.J.Minot et Cie, 5 rue Bérenger,Paris". According to the WELD, the directory of trade-cards compiled by Wharton-Tigar and DeMagistris,, this phrasing dates the card to the year 1889, long after the painting was done and three years after Lauronce's death. Yet it illustrates the relationship between trade card-printing and fan-printing, a link which should be further researched.



Other paintings by Lejeune feature on trade-cards, but at the moment, I only know two fans reproducing this artist's paintings: this one and the 'Overturned Cart'.
