

GARDENS, GAMES AND SENTIMENT -
Some Sources of French Printed Cottons.

By Edith Appleton Standen

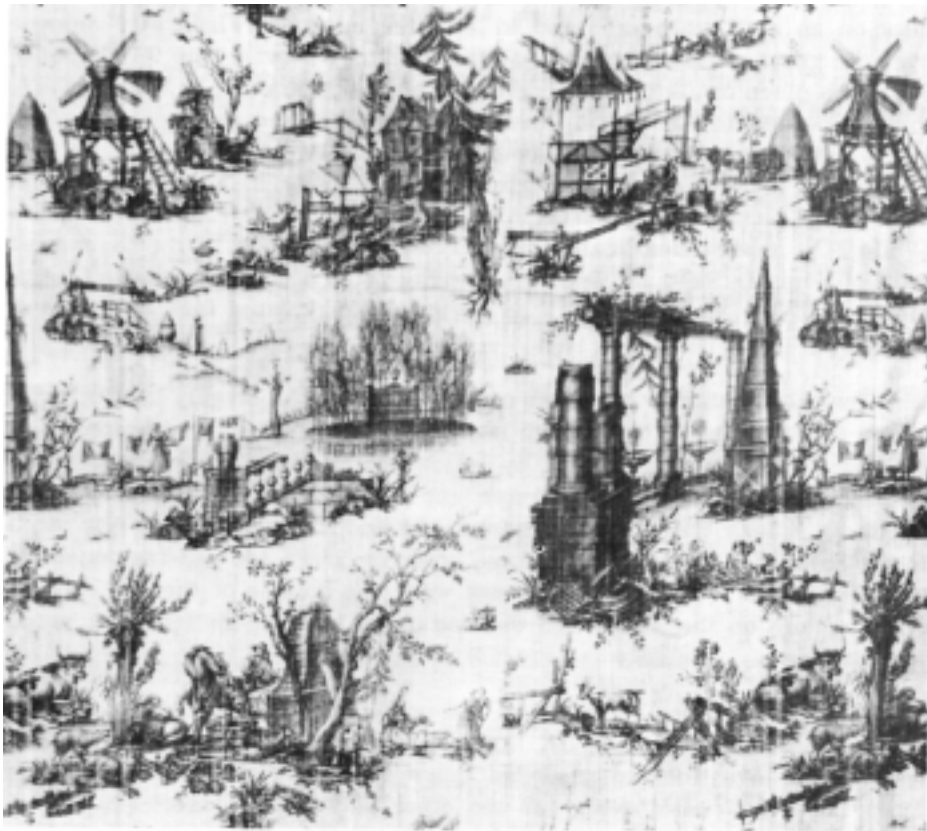
The Tomb of Rousseau

Jean Jacques Rousseau came to Ermemonville on May 20th, 1778, as a guest of the generous, sentimental and rich Marquis de Girardin, and died there on July 2nd. He was buried by torchlight at midnight two days later on an artificial island and in 1780 the marquis raised a monument over the grave, designed by the painter, Hubert Robert. This immediately became a place of pilgrimage, one of the sights of France; among the visitors were Marie Antoinette, Benjamin Franklin and Robespierre. The island with its poplars and the tomb are, as has long been recognized, one element in a *toile de Jouy* (Plate 1); the example in Mulhouse has the Oberkampf factory mark and an inferior copy in the Metropolitan Museum (Plate 2) a more complicated one, crediting the piece to the Neuchâtel firm of Henri DuPasquier and Son, though it was probably made by Petitpierre & Co. at Nantes. "P.C." on a windmill may stand for "Petitpierre, Compagnie".

That the design of the tomb on these cottons is largely imaginary is shown in a print by J. M. Moreau le jeune (Plate 3); a later *toile*, though a less admirable work of art has, by following the print, come much closer to the truth (Plate 4). Even today, the scene has changed very little (Plate 5), though the urn has disappeared and Rousseau's body now rests in the Pantheon. Moreau's pilgrims, however, were too old-fashioned for the designer of the cotton; they now wear the clothes of the new century and the lady on the shore and the one in the boat on the left have put up parasols.

The Jouy cotton is typical of the period with its artfully scattered motifs, wildly incongruous, but highly imaginative. The later artist had no power of invention and used two more prints, these by Elise Saugrain after Louis Gabriel Moreau, for the other half of his design; they show scenes from a park very different from the high-minded, pastoral sensitivity of Ermenonville, namely Bagatelle. One represents the Rocher (Plate 6), the other, the waterfall. The Marquis de Girardin erected a dolmen and a Temple of Philosophy, half classical columns, half rude

stone blocks, both still standing at Ermenonville; a Grotto of Reverie, an obelisk of the Pastoral Muse, and an Altar of Friendship have vanished. He constructed an archery ground and a dancing site for his beloved peasants, who, of course, sacked the estate when its owner and all his family were imprisoned during the Revolution for lack of civic purity. The Comte d'Artois, brother of Louis XVI, built the "Folie" of Bagatelle in 64 days in 1777 to win a bet with Marie Antoinette and had the park laid out by a Scottish gardener, called Thomas Blaikie; it contained an Ile des Tombeaux and a Philosopher's Grotto in the Gothic style, but the temple was dedicated to Love rather than to Friendship. Blaikie, who kept a diary, wrote that his employer "took more pleasure in a girl than a garden." He said of Ermenonville that it was "more in a Romantick than an Elegante stile." Little of the park at Bagatelle survives, but it is today famous for its roses.



**Plate 1. The Tomb of Rousseau
Toile de Jouy, about 1790
Musée de l'Impression sur Etoffes, Mulhouse.**

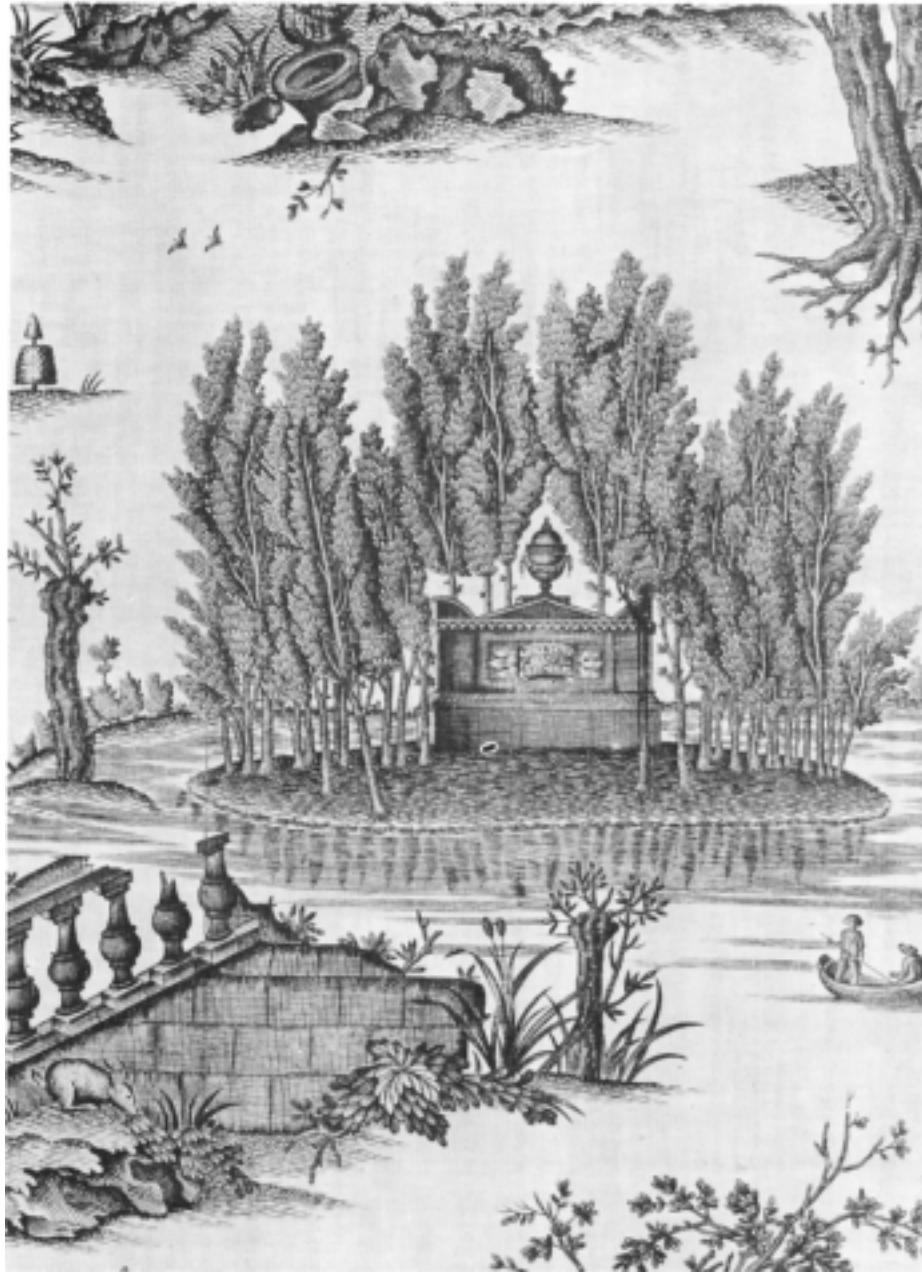


Plate 2. The Tomb of Rousseau, detail
Copperplate-printed cotton
Probably Nantes, Petitpierre et Cie., about 1790
Metropolitan Museum, Leland Fund, 1930, 30.89.



Plate 3. Tombeau de Jean Jacques Rousseau
Engraving by J. M. Moreau le jeune, about 1780
Metropolitan Museum, gift of G. W. Sargent in memory of
John C. Sargent, 1924, 24.63.1064.



Plate 4. The Tomb of Rousseau
Copperplate-printed cotton
French, about 1800
Metropolitan Museum, Rogers Fund, 1961, 61.119.2



Plate 5. The Tomb of Rousseau
Photographs by Edith Standen

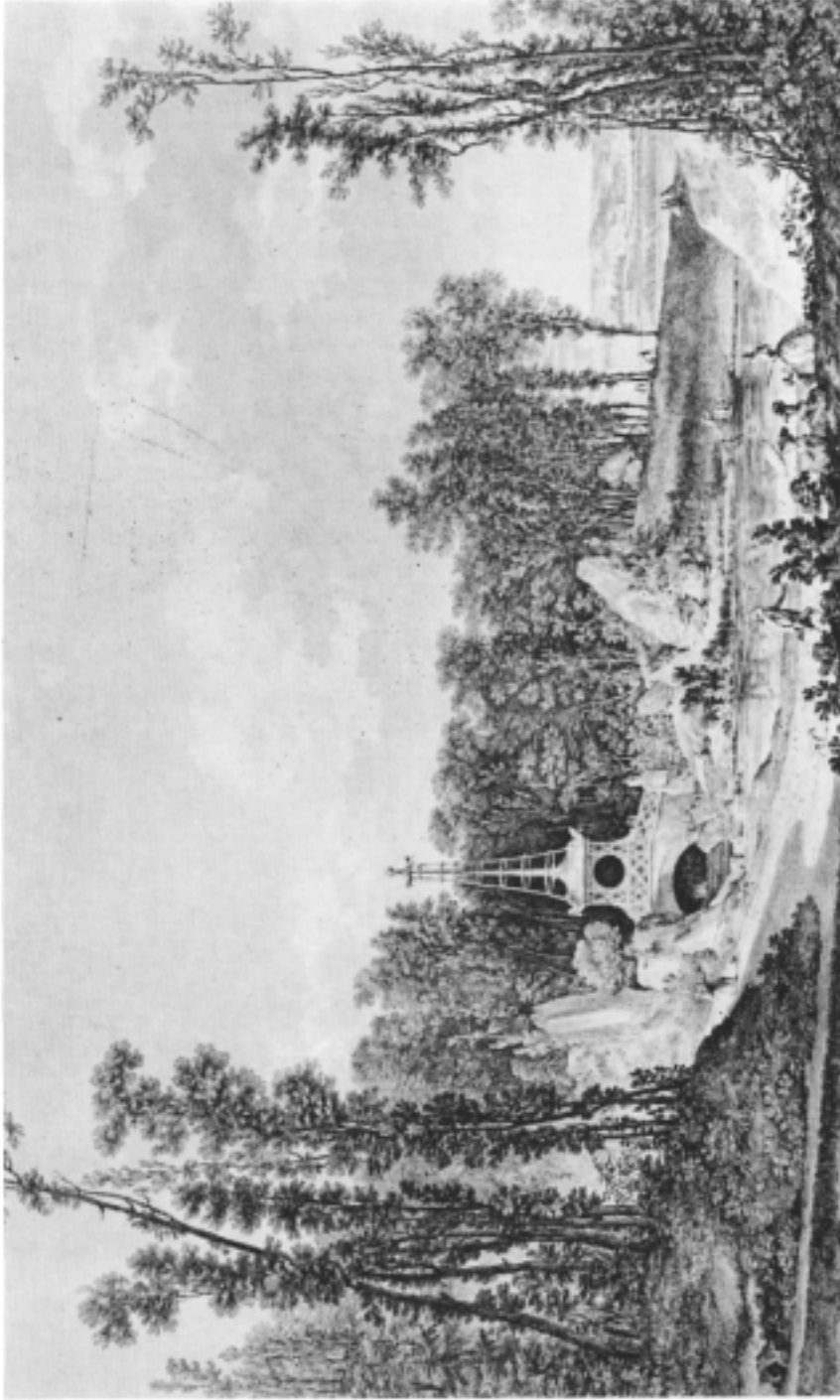


Plate 6. The Rocher at Bagatelle
Engraving by J. C. Nattier
Metropolitan Museum, Rogers Fund, 1921, 21.91.352.

The Strolling Players

The title, *Les Comédiens ambulants*, appears in a list of printed cottons made at the Favre, Petitpierre manufactory at Nantes and has always been given to a *toile* of which the Metropolitan Museum owns an example (Plate 7). The group of figures in or near the one-horse cart are indeed clearly identified as actors or musicians; the man sitting at the back holds a book, as if studying his part, and musical instruments, among them a lute and a tambourine, are slung behind the wheels. But the source of the design shows wanderers of another kind; it is one of the prints of gypsies by Jacques Callot (Plate 8). Even without the inscription mentioning the good fortunes foretold by the gypsies, these people are identified by their bare feet, large hats and shawls, and the babies carried at their mothers' backs. The original has been skillfully simplified and adapted. The horse is copied very closely, but the outlandish costumes have become more conventional, the cart has a covering and, above all, the amount of household goods and animals, dead or alive, carried by the vagrants, has been drastically cut down. Only the children walking alongside the cart, though the boy no longer has his fantastically enormous hat, are still laden with several fowl.



Plate 7. The Strolling Players, detail
Copperplate-printed cotton
Nantes, Favre, Petitpierre Manufactory, about 1798
Metropolitan Museum, Rogers Fund, 1964, 64.296.

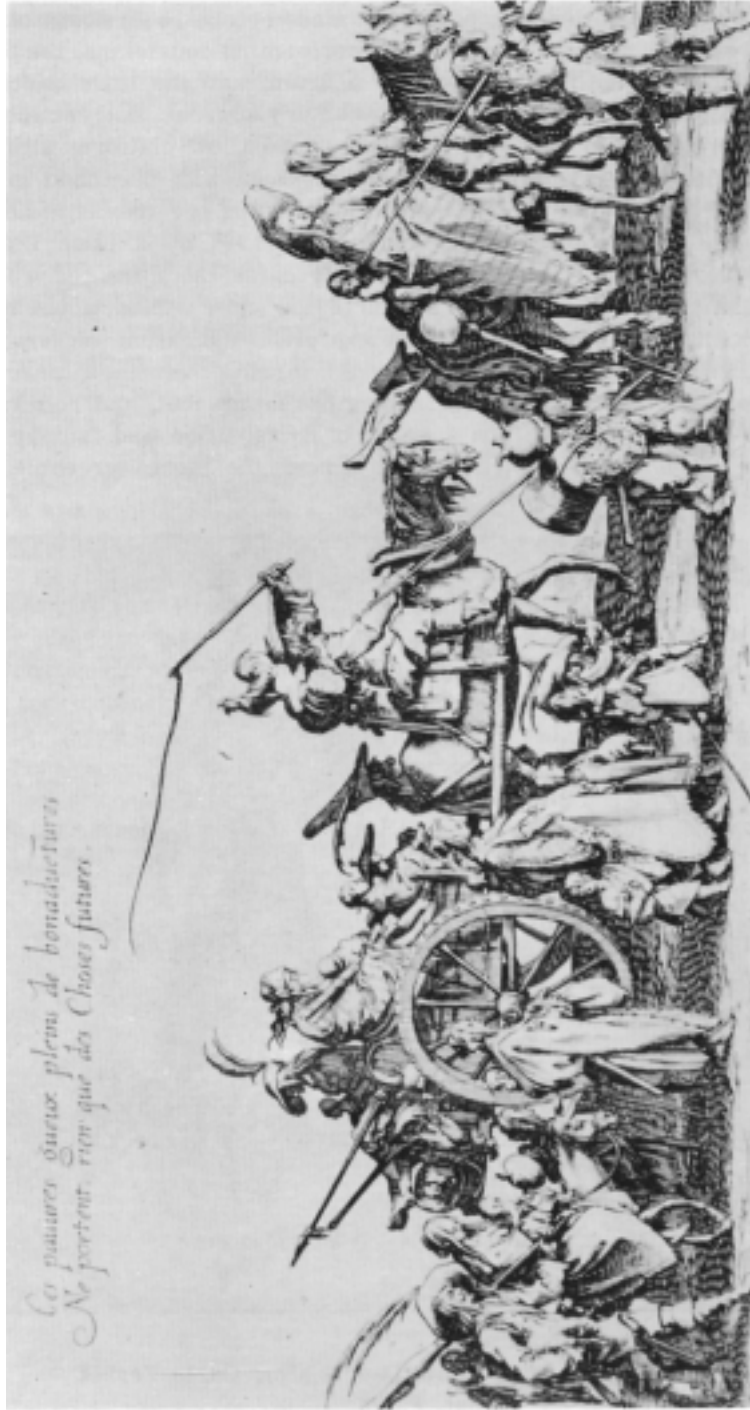


Plate 8. Les Bohémiens, le départ
Etching by Jacques Callot
Metropolitan Museum, Rogers Fund, 1922, 22.67.47

Callot's print is believed to have been made before 1630; some of the other elements of the *toile*, such as the performing musicians, the blind hurdy-gurdy player led by the boy with a drum, and the little dancers, would seem also to be derived from 17th-century sources, not yet identified. But two figures in the group standing round a low platform with two actors on it have a very different origin; the man with one hand in his pocket and the other raising the quizzing glass to his eye are *Incredibles*, *les Incroyables*, caricatured in a color print of 1797 by J. Louis Dancis after Carle Vernet (Plate 9). This effectively dates the *toile*; the woman on-looker also wears clothes and hair-do of the same period, about 1800. This juxtaposition of old and new gives a vivid indication of how the designers of such cottons must have worked, turning over their precious hoards of prints, selecting motifs from this one or that, and redrawing and combining them with a flair, a sense of composition and fantasy that make these copperplate-printed fabrics among the most agreeable and amusing furnishing stuffs ever produced.



Plate 9. *Les Incroyables*
Engraving by Louis Dancis after Carle Vernet
Photo - Bibl. nat. Paris.

Love and Friendship

Color prints by Jean Baptiste Mallet after Pierre Paul Prud'hon, made under the Empire, have provided the compositions for two scenes on an early 19th-century cotton in the Metropolitan Museum (Plate 10-12). The symbolism, hardly abstruse, is helpfully summed up in captions: Love guides them, Friendship brings them back. The original prints have two companion-pieces; in one, the lover lowers the fully-clad girl into a glass bath, in the other, he helps her onto a couch by his side, while Cupid raises the blanket to cover them. The cotton emphasizes friendship rather than love; in its third episode, Time breaks Cupid's bow and, according to the inscription, "Love consoles himself in the arms of Friendship for the outrages of Time." The faithful dog watches.

Only one detail is puzzling: why does the temple of Friendship have a broken roof? The answer is provided by another version of the cotton, which was published as in a private Spanish collection at the end of the last century. The landscape background is the same and the temple, seen in its entirety, is half ruined, but the people are different. Cupid rows a boat toward the temple, with Time as his passenger, but, on the other side, Time plies the oars. Above, a woman sits under a tree, with only a dog for company. The allegory seems to refer to youth and age: Cupid leads only to a ruined temple; Time takes control later; Friendship, symbolized by the dog, is the only consolation. The designer of the Metropolitan Museum piece borrowed the landscape from this cotton or its source, but peopled it from the simplified Mallet-Prud'hon prints, without paying too much attention to the suitability of all the details.

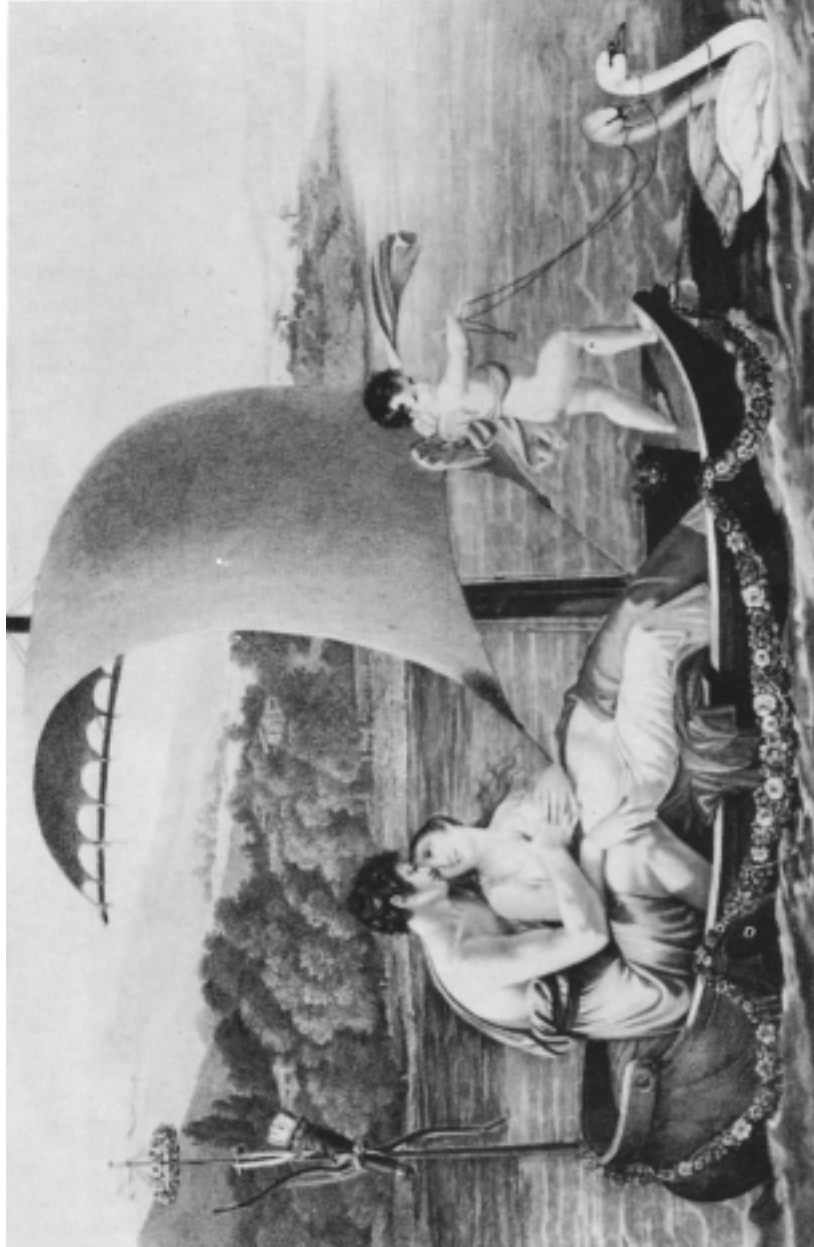


Plate 11. L'Amour les conduit
Color engraving by J. B. Mallet after Pierre Paul Prud'hon
Inscribed: Déposé à la Bibliothèque Impériale
Musée Marmottan, Paris.



Plate 12. L'Amitié les ramène
Companion-piece to last
Musée Marmottan, Paris.

Riding at the Ring

The Tivoli Garden was described in *Galignani's Paris Guide* of 1822 as "the most celebrated and most amusing public garden in Paris." A slightly earlier guidebook listed the amusements on the lawns as "rope-dancers, mountebanks, groups riding at the ring, or playing at shuttlecock." Riding at the ring was illustrated in a print that appeared in a series called the *Bon Genre*; this design was adapted for use on a cotton in the Metropolitan Museum (Plate 13). The woman standing on a raised platform on the right holds a slanting board, down which she slides rings as the riders whirl round on the miniature carrousel. The woman seen from the back has successfully caught a ring on her small stick. The motive power for the merry-go-round is provided by a man standing in a pit below. Everybody except this poor toiler is dressed in the height of fashion for the immediate post-Restoration period in France.

The Metropolitan Museum also owns an anonymous drawing showing the other scenes on the *toile*, blind-man's buff below and outdoor refreshments above (Plate 14). The latter, of course, were available at Tivoli; the guidebooks speak of lemonade and orgeat. There were many other ways of passing the time, among them dancing: "The waltz is the favorite dance; nearly two hundred couples may sometimes be seen following each other through the giddy and voluptuous whirls of this fascinating, but dangerous amusement." A warning is added: "The visitor must bring his partner with him, or he will not easily meet with a fair one willing to admit a stranger to the freedoms which this dance allows."



Plate 13. Riding at the Ring, detail
Copperplate-printed cotton
French, 1815-1820
Metropolitan Museum, Rogers Fund, 1927, 27.92



Plate 14. Le Carrousel

Drawing, French, early XIX Century

Metropolitan Museum, Elisha Whittelsey Collection, 60.620.209