

Sebastian Evans (1830-1909)

1 *The Seven Fiddlers*

A blue robe on their shoulder,
And an ivory bow in hand,
Seven fiddlers came with their fiddles
A-fiddling through the land,
And they fiddled a tune on their fiddles 5
That none could understand.

For none who heard their fiddling
Might keep his ten toes still,
E'en the cripple threw down his crutches,
And danced against his will: 10
Young and old they all fell a-dancing,
While the fiddlers fiddled their fill.

They fiddled down to the ferry —
The ferry by Severn-side,
And they stept aboard the ferry, 15
None else to row or guide,
And deftly steered the pilot,
And stoutly the oars they plied.

Then suddenly in mid-channel
These fiddlers ceased to row, 20
And the pilot spake to his fellows
In a tongue that none may know:
“Let us home to our fathers and brothers,
And the maidens we love below.”

Then the fiddlers seized their fiddles, 25
And sang to their fiddles a song:
“We are coming, coming, O brothers,
“To the home we have left so long,
“For the world still loves the fiddler,
“And the fiddler’s tune is strong.” 30

Then they stept from out the ferry
 Into the Severn-sea,
Down into the depths of the waters
 Where the homes of the fiddlers be,
And the ferry-boat drifted slowly
 Forth to the ocean free! 35

But where those jolly fiddlers
 Walked down into the deep,
The ripples are never quiet,
 But for ever dance and leap, 40
Though the Severn-sea be silent,
 And the winds be all asleep.

1865

(From *Brother Fabian's Manuscript; and Other Poems.*
London, 1865)