Gregory says he had the legend from the interpretation of “ a certain Syrian ” ; in point of fact the story is very common in Syriac sources. It forms the subject of a homily of Jacob of Sarug *(ob.* 521 A.D.), which is given in the *Acta Sanctorum.* Another Syriac version is printed in Land’s *Anecdota,* iii. 87 *sq.* ; see also Barhebræus, *Chrom Eccles.,* i 142 *sq.,* and compare Assemani, *Bib. Or.,* i. 335 *sq.* Some forms of the legend give, eight sleepers,— *e.g.,* an ancient MS. of the 6th century now in the British Museum *(Cat. Syr. MSS.,* p. 1090). There are considerable variations as to their names. The legend rapidly attained a wide diffusion through­out Christendom ; its currency in the East is testified by its accept­ance by Mohammed (sur. xviii.), who calls them *Ashāb al-Kalif,* “the men of the cave.” According to Al-Binúní *(Chronology,* tr. by Sachau, p. 285) certain undecayed corpses of monks were shown in a cave as the sleepers of Ephesus in the 9th century. The seven sleepers are a favourite subject in early mediæval art.

SEVERN, The, next to the Thames in length among the rivers of England, rises at Maes Hafren on the eastern side of Plinlimmon, on the south-south-west borders of Montgomeryshire, and flows in a nearly semicircular course of about 200 miles to the sea ; the direct distance from its source to its mouth in the Bristol Channel is about 80 miles. By the Britons it was called Halfren, and its old Latin name was *Sabrina.* Through Mont­gomeryshire its course is at first in a south-easterly direc­tion, and for the first 15 miles it flows over a rough precipitous bed. At Llanidloes, where the valley widens to a breadth of one or two miles and assumes a more fertile appearance, it bends towards the north-east, passing Newtown and Welshpool. On the borders of Shropshire it receives the Vyrnwy, and then turning in a south-easterly direction enters the broad rich plain of Shrewsbury, after which it bends southward past Ironbridge and Bridg­north to Bewdley in Worcestershire. In Shropshire it receives a number of tributaries (see Shropshire). Still continuing its southerly course through Worcestershire it passes Stourport, where it receives the Stour (left), and Worcester, shortly after which it receives the Teme (right). It enters Gloucestershire at Tewkesbury, where it receives the Avon (left), after which, bending in a south-westerly direction, it passes the town of Gloucester, 18 miles below which the estuary widens out into the Bristol Channel, at the point where it receives from the left the Lower Avon or Bristol river, and from the right the Wye.

From Newtown its fall is 465 feet, the average fall per mile being about 2 feet 3 inches, but from Ironbridge to Gloucester, a distance of about 70 miles, the fall is only about 103 feet. Between Stour­port and Gloucester the breadth is 150 feet, but below that town the breadth rapidly increases and the banks become bolder and more picturesque. Owing to the gradual decrease in the width and depth of the Bristol Channel the tide enters with great force, forming a tidal wave or bore about 9 feet in height, which at cer­tain times causes great destruction, among the more serious inun­dations being those of 1606, 1687, 1703, and 1883. The total area drained by the Severn is about 4500 square miles. Its navigation extends to about 150 miles above its mouth ; barges can ascend as far as Stourport, and large vessels to Gloucester. Owing to the diffi­culties of the navigation the Gloucester and Berkeley Ship Canal, 18 miles in length, was constructed, admitting vessels of 350 tons to Gloucester, the river only admitting vessels of 150 tons. The only other important port is Bristol, but there are a few smaller ports and fishing towns, while by means of canals the Severn has con­nexion with some of the principal towns of England. With the Thames it is connected by the Stroudwater and Thames and Severn Canals ; by various canals it has communication with the Trent and the rivers of the north ; and the Hereford and Gloucester Canal connects those two cities. The Severn is a good salmon river, and is specially famous for its lampreys.

SEVERN, Joseph (1793-1879), portrait and subject painter, was born in 1793. During his earlier years he practised portraiture as a miniaturist ; and, having studied in the schools of the Royal Academy, he exhibited his first work in oil, Hermia and Helena, a subject from the *Midsummer Night’s Dream,* in the Royal Academy Exhibi­tion of 1819. In 1820 he gained the gold medal and a three years’ travelling studentship for his Una and the Red Cross Knight in the Cave of Despair, a painting now

in the possession of the representatives of the late Lord Houghton. He accompanied his friend Keats the poet to Italy, and nursed him till his death in 1821. In 1861 he was appointed British consul at Rome, a post which he held till 1872, and during a great part of the time he also acted as Italian consul. His most remarkable work is the Spectre Ship from the *Ancient Mariner.* He painted Cordelia Watching by the Bed of Lear, the Roman Beggar, Ariel, the Fountain, and Rienzi, executed a large altarpiece for the church of St Paul at Rome, and pro­duced many portraits, including one of Baron Bunsen and several of Keats. He died at Rome August 3, 1879.

SEVERUS, Lucius Septimius, the twenty-first emperor of Rome, reigned from 193 to 211 a.d. He was born in 146 at Leptis Magna, an African coast town in the district of Syrtes, whose ancient prosperity is still attested by its extensive ruins. In this region of Africa, despite its long possession by the Romans, the Punic tongue was still spoken by the people in general. Severus had to acquire Latin as a foreign language, and is said to have spoken it to the end of his days with a strong African accent. After he had arrived at the throne he dismissed abruptly from Rome a sister who had come to visit him, because he felt shame at her abominable Latin. Yet Severus and his dynasty were almost the only emperors of provincial descent who frankly cherished the province of their origin, while the province showed true loyalty to the only Roman emperor ever born on African soil, and to the successors who derived their title from him.

Of the origin of the Severi nothing is known : it is a natural but very doubtful conjecture that the L. Septimius Severus, a native of Africa, addressed by the poet Statius, was an ancestor of the emperor who bore the same name. The father of Severus was a Roman citizen of equestrian rank, and it may safely be affirmed that the family held a poor position when he was born, but had risen in importance by the time he reached manhood. Two of his uncles attained to consular rank. Fulvius Pius, the maternal grandfather of Severus, is often identified with the man of that name who was governor of Africa, and, after being condemned for corruption by Pertinax, was highly honoured by Didius Julianus ; but dates are strongly against the identification. Of the future emperor’s education we learn nothing but its results. Spartianus declares him to have been “very learned in Latin and Greek literature,” to have had a genuine zeal for study, and to have been fond of philosophy and rhetoric. But the learning of rulers is often seen through a magnifying medium, and we may better accept the statement of Dio Cassius that in the pursuit of education his eagerness was greater than his success, and that he was rather shrewd than facile. No doubt in his early years he acquired that love for jurisprudence which distinguished him as emperor. Of his youth we know only that it was entirely spent at Leptis. Beyond that there is merely one anecdotal fabri­cation giving an account of youthful wildness.

The removal of Severus from Leptis to Rome is attri­buted by his biographer to the desire for higher education, but was also no doubt due in some degree to ambition. From the emperor Marcus Aurelius he early obtained, by intercession of a consular uncle, the distinction of the broad purple stripe. At twenty-six, that is, almost at the earliest age allowed by law, Severus attained the quæstor- ship and a seat in the senate, and proceeded as *quaesiοr militaris* to the senatorial province of Bætica, in the Peninsula. "While Severus was temporarily absent in Africa in consequence of the death of his father, the province of Bætica, disordered by invasion and internal commotion, was taken over by the emperor, who gave the senate Sardinia in exchange. On this Severus became