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# HISTORY I



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## SERTORIUS

I. It is not, perhaps, surprising that in the illimitable course of time, on the ever-changing tide of fortune, blind chance should often be carried towards coincidences. For whether the number of the essences underlying matter is unlimited, and fortune thus finds, in the abundance of material, an unfailing source of similarity in phenomena, or whether phenomena result from the combination of essentials strictly limited in number, it must frequently occur that the same effects are produced by the same causes. Some people love to collect all the instances, of which they have heard or read, of those casual phenomena which seem to be the product of reason and forethought; such as, for example, the fact that there were two famous men of the name of Attis, the one a Syrian, the other an Arcadian, and both were killed by boars. Again there were two Actaeons, one of whom was torn to pieces by his dogs, the other by his lovers. There were two Scipios, the earlier of whom shook Carthage to its foundations, while the later destroyed it utterly. It was the horses of Laomedon that led to the capture of Ilium by Heracles, and it was the famous Wooden Horse which enabled Agamemnon to capture it a second time; and yet a third time the city was taken by Charidemus,<sup>1</sup> because, a horse having fallen in the gateway, the inhabitants were unable to close the gates with sufficient speed. There are two cities, each called after a sweet-smelling flower, Ios<sup>2</sup> and Smyrna;<sup>3</sup> and we are told that the poet Homer was born in the one, and died in the other. To this list of coincidences let me add the following. The most consummate of the world's generals, whose achievements have been mainly due

<sup>1</sup> *Circ.* 355 B.C.

<sup>2</sup> The violet.

<sup>3</sup> Myrrh.