

Little is known of Vedic warfare, but it seems to have been simple. A body of foot soldiers with charioteers composed every army, the two going together,⁵ and the foot soldiers being often overthrown by the charioteers,⁶ who were doubtless the Kṣatriyas and their foremost retainers. Probably the foot soldiers bore little armour, and used only the bow for offence, as is suggested by the account that Herodotus gives of the Indian contingent of the army with which Xerxes invaded Greece.⁷ The nobles, on the other hand, may have had cuirass (Varman), helmet (Śiprā), and hand-guard (Hastaghna) as a protection from the friction of the bowstring. On the car was the charioteer, and on his left the warrior (Sārathi, Savyaṣṭhā). Riding is never mentioned in war,⁸ and would hardly have been suited to Vedic ideas, for the warrior mainly depended on his bow, which he could not have used effectively from horse-back. The offensive weapon (Āyudha) was practically the bow; spear and sword and axe were very seldom used.

Whether there was a strict tribal organization of the host, such as is once alluded to in the Homeric poems,⁹ and is also recognized in Germany by Tacitus,¹⁰ is uncertain (cf. Vṛāta), but in the Epic relations (Jñāti) fight together,¹¹ and this rule, no doubt, applied more or less in Vedic times also.

Cities were besieged and invested (upa-sad, pra-bhid),¹² probably as a rule by blockade, since the ineffective means of assault of the time would have rendered storming difficult and expensive. Hillebrandt¹³ thinks that the *pur carīṣṇū* of the Rigveda¹⁴ was a kind of chariot; it may—like the Trojan horse—have been an Indian anticipation of the Roman means of assaulting a town.

Besides ordinary wars of defence and conquest, raids into

⁵ Rv. ii. 12, 8.

⁶ Av. vii. 62, 1. Cf. Muṣṭihān

⁷ Herodotus, vii. 65.

⁸ Zimmer, *Altindisches Leben*, 296, where he admits riding to be mentioned elsewhere; Whitney, *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 3, 312.

⁹ *Iliad*, ii. 362.

¹⁰ *Germania*, 7.

¹¹ Hopkins, *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 13, 193.

¹² Cf. Taittiriya Saṃhitā, vi. 2, 3, 1; Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, iii. 4, 4, 3-5; Aitareya Brāhmaṇa, i. 23, 2, etc.; Gopatha Brāhmaṇa, ii. 2, 7; Hillebrandt, *Vedische Mythologie*, i, 300, n.

¹³ *Op. cit.* 3, 289, n.

¹⁴ viii. 1, 2-8, where it is attributed to the demon Śuṣṇa.