

so likewise, and the goad of the plougher was the mark of a Vaiśya in life⁹ and in death.¹⁰ It would be absurd to suppose that the Āryan Vaiśyas did not engage in industry and commerce (*cf.* Paṇi, Vaṇij), but pastoral pursuits and agriculture must have been their normal occupations.

In war the Vaiśyas must have formed the bulk of the force under the Kṣatriya leaders (see Kṣatriya). But like the Homeric commoners, the Vaiśyas may well have done little of the serious fighting, being probably ill-provided with either body armour or offensive weapons.

That the Vaiśyas were engaged in the intellectual life of the day is unlikely; nor is there any tradition, corresponding to that regarding the Kṣatriyas, of their having taken part in the evolution of the doctrine of Brahman, the great philosophic achievement of the age. The aim of the Vaiśya's ambition was, according to the Taittirīya Saṃhitā,¹¹ to become a Grāmaṇī, or village headman, a post probably conferred by the king on wealthy Vaiśyas, of whom no doubt there were many. It is impossible to say if in Vedic times a Vaiśya could attain to nobility or become a Brahmin. No instance can safely be quoted in support of such a view,¹² though such changes of status may have taken place (see Kṣatriya and Varṇa).

It is denied by Fick¹³ that the Vaiśyas were ever a caste, and the denial is certainly based on good grounds if it is held that a caste means a body within which marriage is essential, and which follows a hereditary occupation (*cf.* Varṇa). But it would be wrong¹⁴ to suppose that the term Vaiśya was merely applied by theorists to the people who were not nobles or priests. It must have been an early appellation of a definite class which was separate from the other classes, and properly to be compared with them. Moreover, though there were differences among Vaiśyas, there were equally differences among Kṣatriyas and Brāhmanas, and it is impossible to deny

⁹ Kāthaka Saṃhitā, xxxvii. 1.

¹⁰ Kauśika Sūtra, lxxx.

¹¹ ii. 5, 4, 4.

¹² Rhys Davids, *Buddhist India*, 55 *et seq.*, argues to the contrary from Buddhist evidence; but this has no

cogency for the Vedic period, and much, if not all, of it is hardly in point as concerns this issue.

¹³ *Die sociale Gliederung*, 163 *et seq.*

¹⁴ *Cf. Indian Empire*, I, 347.