

## SECOND CHAPTER.

(*The As'vina Shastra. The beginning day of the Gavâm ayanam. The use of the Rathantara and Brihat Sâmans and their kindreds. The Mahâvrata day of the Sattrâ.*)<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The As'vin Shastra is one of the longest recitations by the Hotar. It is only a modification of the Prâtaranuvâka. Its principal parts are the same as those of the Prâtaranuvâka, the *Agneya kratu*, *Ushasya kratu*, and *As'vina kratu* (see page 111), i. e. three series of hymns and verses in seven kinds of metre, addressed to Agni, Ushâs, and the As'vins, which deities rule at the end of the night, and at the very commencement of the day. In addition to these three *kratus* of the Prâtaranuvâka, in the As'vina Shastra, there are verses addressed to other deities, chiefly the sun, repeated. Before commencing to repeat it the Hotar (*not* the Adhvaryu) must sacrifice thrice a little melted butter, and eat the rest of it. These three oblations are given to Agni, Ushâs, and the two As'vins. Each is accompanied with a Yajus-like mantra. That one addressed to Agni is :

अग्निरज्जी गायत्रेण वृद्धसा तमश्यां तमन्वारभे तस्यै सामवतु तस्यै स्वाहा । “Agni is driving with the Gâyatrî metre (this metre being his

carriage), might I reach him ; I hold him ; may this (melted butter) help me to him ; Svâhâ to him.” The mantras repeated for the Ajya offerings to Ushâs and the As'vins differ very little. उषा

अजिनो वैशुभेन वृद्धसा तामश्यां तामन्वारभे तस्यै सामवतु तस्यै

स्वाहा । अश्विनावज्जिनौ जागतेन वृद्धसा तावश्यां तावन्वारभे

ताभ्यां सामवतु ताभ्यां स्वाहा. (As'v. S'r. S. 6, 5.) After having

eaten the rest of the melted butter, he touches water only, but does not rinse his mouth in the usual way (by *âchamana*). He then sits down behind his Dhishnya (fire-place) in a peculiar posture, representing an eagle who is just about flying up. He draws up his two legs, puts both his knees close to each other, and touches the earth with his toes. I saw a priest, who had once repeated the As'vin Shastra (there are scarcely more than half a dozen Brahmans living all over India who actually have repeated it), make the posture with great facility, but I found it difficult to imitate it well.

The whole As'vina Shastra comprises a thousand Brihatî verses. The actual number of verses is, however, larger. All verses in whatever metre they are, are reduced to Brihatîs by counting their aggregate number of syllables and dividing them by 36 (of so many syllables consists the Brihatî). The full account is cast up in the Kaushîtaki Brâhmanam, 18, 3.