

SIXTH BOOK.

FIRST CHAPTER.

(On the offices of the Grâvastut and Subrahmanya.)

1.

(On the origin of the office of the Grâvastut.¹ The
Serpent Rishi Arbuda.)

The gods held (once upon a time) a sacrificial session in Sarvacharu. They did not succeed in

¹ See also him about As'v. S'r. S. 5, 12. His services are only required at the midday libation. He performs his function of repeating mantras over the Soma squeezing stones before the so-called Dadhi Gharma ceremony. He enters through the eastern gate, and passes on to the two Havirdhânas (the two carts, on which the sacrificial offerings are put, and the two covered places, in which these two carts are). Having arrived north-east of the exterior front of the axe (*akshas'iras*) of the southern Havirdhâna, he throws off a stalk of grass held in his hand, which ceremony is called *nirasanam* (it is performed often by other priests also). He then faces the Soma shoots assuming a peculiar posture. The Adhvaryu gives him a band (*ushnîsha*) which he ties round his face. As soon as the Adhvaryu and his assistants take the Soma sprouts from below the *adhishavana* board (see the note to 7, 32), he ought to repeat the mantras over the Grâvâṇas which are now being employed for extracting the Soma juice. He commences with verses containing the term *su* to squeeze, or derivatives of it. The first is: *abhi tvâ deva savitar* (1, 24, 3). After some more single verses follow the three principal Grâvâṇa hymns, viz. *praita vadantu* (10, 94), *â va riṁjase* (10, 76), and *pra vo grâvâṇaḥ* (10, 175). The first and the last are said to have been seen by *Arbuda* the Serpent Rishi, the second by *Jarat karna*, one of the Serpent tribe also. These hymns very likely formed part of the so-called *Sarpaveda* or Serpent Veda (see the Gopatha Brâhmaṇam 1, 10, according to whose statement this Veda came from the east), and were originally foreign to the Rigveda. They may be, nevertheless, very ancient. The two latter hymns are to be repeated before the last verse of the first, and are thus treated like a Nivid at the evening libation. Either in the midst, or before, or