

schools in which sacred poetry was regularly taught, just as the art of the bards and scalds with the Celtic and Scandinavian nations, must have preceded that period to which we owe the present collection. If an old song was replaced by a new one, which appeared more beautiful and finished, the former was in most cases, irrecoverably lost. Old and new poets are frequently mentioned in the hymns of the Rigveda; but the more modern Rishis of the Vedic period appear not to have regarded the productions of their predecessors with any particular reverence which might have induced them to keep their early relics.

Now the question arises, are the finished and polished hymns of the Rigveda with their artificial metres the most ancient relics of the whole religious literature of the Brahmans, or are still more ancient pieces in the other Vedic writings to be found? It is hardly credible, that the Brahmanical priests employed at their sacrifices in the earliest times hymns similar to those which were used when the ritual became settled. The first sacrifices were no doubt simple offerings performed without much ceremonial. A few appropriate solemn words, indicating the giver, the nature of the offering, the deity to which as well as the purpose for which it was offered, and addresses to the objects that were offered, were sufficient. All this could be embodied in the sacrificial formulas known in later times principally by the name of *Yajus*, whilst the older one appears to have been *Yája* (preserved in *pra-yája*, *anu-yája*, &c). The invocation of the deity by different names,