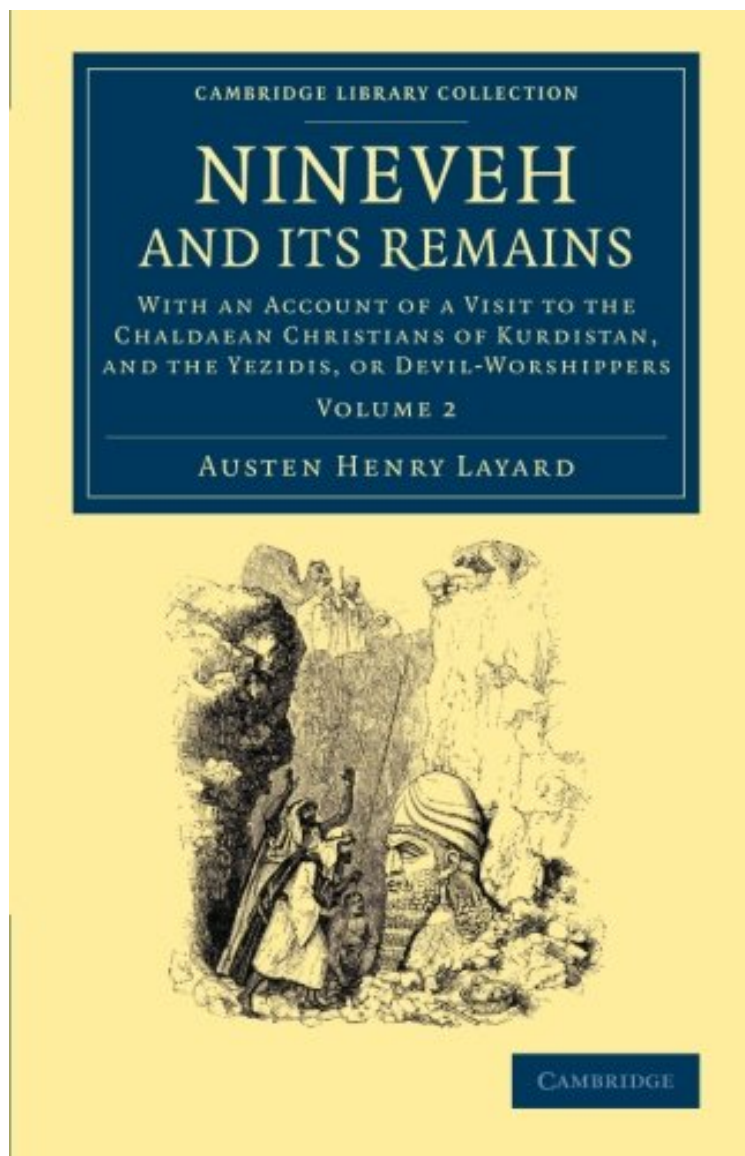


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Before abandoning archaeology for politics, Sir Austen Henry Layard (1817-94) carried out major excavations in Mesopotamia between 1845 and 1851, uncovering important evidence of ancient Assyrian civilisation. Although he originally believed that Nimrud was Nineveh, he later confirmed that Kuyunjik was the location of the ancient city. First published in 1849, this two-volume work is a mixture of excavation report, ancient history, anthropology and travel writing. Layard's excitement at the extent and importance of the finds as soon as digging commenced is clearly conveyed, and he places Mesopotamian history in the context of the more familiar biblical and classical worlds. His Discoveries in the Ruins of Nineveh and Babylon (1853) is also reissued in this series. Illustrated with reproductions of monumental sculptures, smaller finds and excavation plans, Volume 2 follows the progress of digs at a number of sites. The volume's latter part covers the history, culture and customs of the ancient Assyrians.