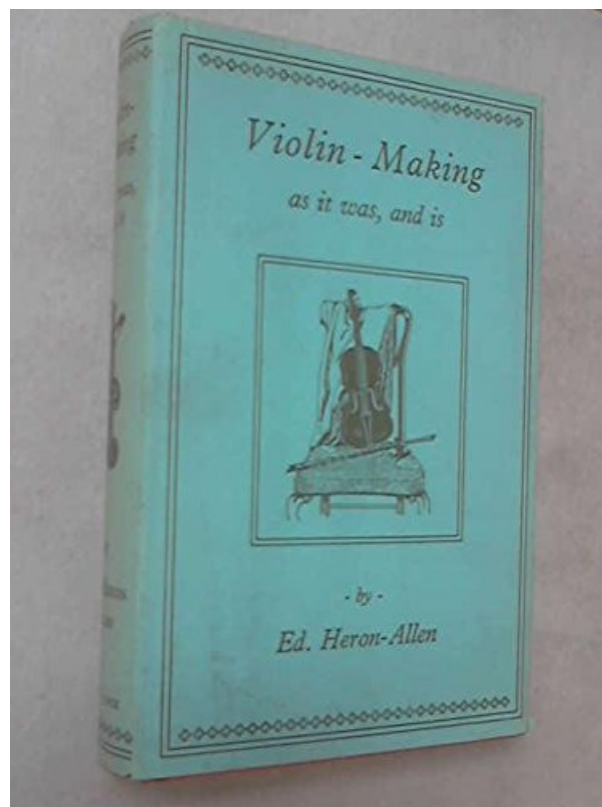
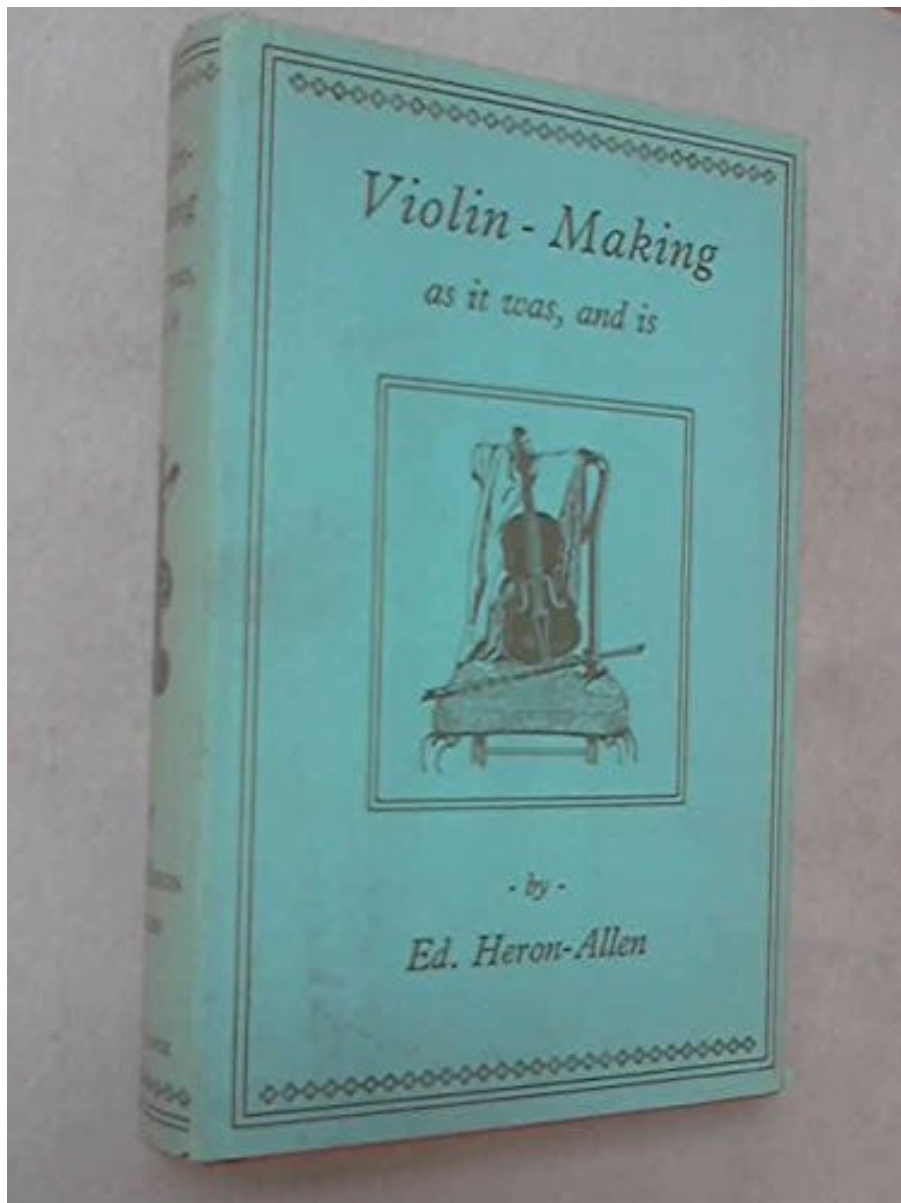


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Traces the history of the violin, discusses the materials used in violin-making, and offers guidance on the construction of a violin.

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## Most helpful customer reviews

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful.

Utter bunk but interesting on every page

By Thomas Fitz Hugh Mace

This book, a reprint of Edward Heron-Allen's "Violin Making As It Was an Is," of 1884 is a very poor choice if you don't know the fundamentals of violin making and you really want to learn. For that, you should start with Simone Sacconi's 'The "Secrets" of Stradivari,' probably the single most influential book of the past 30 years (available in Dipper's English or Adelman's German translation from specialist online booksellers, but not, alas, from Amazon.com). If you are an amateur who wants to make an instrument, try one or more of Henry Strobel's books.

That said, "Violin Making As It Was an Is" is still quite an interesting book. Edward Heron-Allen was a rather brilliant Victorian polymath who had an intense interest in the violin. Somehow, he convinced the distinguished French violin maker George Chanut, then working in England, to show him how to build an instrument. The next thing Chanut knew, and apparently to his intense dismay, Heron-Allen was publishing what he had learned in a magazine intended for gentleman amateurs. His book is based on those articles.

What we have, then, is information about 19th-century French violin making reported through the filter of a talented English amateur. From this perspective, the most interesting part to me was the chapter on using a French outer form. I was also curious about the descriptions of tools and some odd older building techniques

such as gluing linen to the sides before bending.

If you do read the book, you should certainly be aware that most of it is utter bunk. At the same time, I find something interesting on almost every page and quite enjoy the author's energetic style. Despite its strange take on the craft, "Violin Making As It Was and Is" has also had a lot of influence, especially on earlier generations of English makers, who in a time before the proliferation of violin-making schools, made profitable use of what it had to offer.

Another reviewer mentioned the quip about this being "Violin Making as it Wasn't and Isn't" and that is certainly just. I would merely add Pliny the Elder's remark that there is "no book so bad but that some good might be got out of it."

12 of 13 people found the following review helpful.

Difficult to do justice

By awolfe\_98@yahoo.com

This volume certainly qualifies as one of those rare gems which holds a special place in your bookcase or shop. Heron-Allen manages to give complete detail to all facets of preparation and construction, in addition to holding the reader's attention through numerous footnotes and sidelines. A detailed technical book written in a very enjoyable fashion, and with a style no longer seen. I've been known to read this book on several occasions for pure joy.

18 of 18 people found the following review helpful.

Excellent book for the builder

By A Customer

This book covers everything from wood selection to finish. Includes full size plans for molds. The author also gives specifications of select Stradivarius violins. A must for any builders library!

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