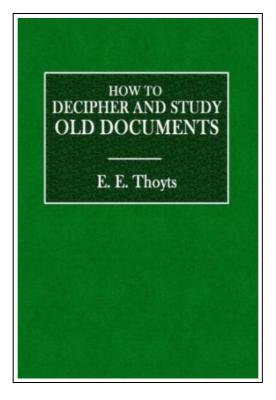
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HOW TO DECIPHER AND STUDY OLD DOCUMENTS: BEING A GUIDE TO ANCIENT MANUSCRIPTS (PAPERBACK)



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Print on Demand *****.From the Introduction. BOOKS written to teach any branch of human knowledge are, in most cases, written by persons who have long known and used the knowledge which they impart, and, perhaps for that reason, have more or less forgotten the steps of the ladder up which they have climbed; but in this case the process has been so recent, that the difficulties and dangers of each step have been remembered, and the reader accordingly warned against them. The meaning of the various kinds of documents which are likely to be found among the title-deeds of an estate, or among the archives of a parish or a corporation, are described without needless technicalities, in a practical way, which will appeal to those who begin to work among such material without previous knowledge. The first step, of course, is to learn to read. This wants perseverance and a quick eye, but regular practice will soon enable the student to read any ordinary documents, which at first seemed utterly unintelligible, and gradually the power of understanding really difficult and obscure MSS. will be acquired. But this first step must be thoroughly mastered, for to attempt to get information from old writings without thoroughly knowing the forms of the letters, and the different systems of abbreviations and contractions, would be like trying to keep accounts without knowing how to add up a column of figures. And indeed paleography is the foundation of all history. There may be historians, like the late Mr. Freeman, who have but little knowledge of the science (he, I believe, boasted of his inability to read a manuscript), but then such writers rely on the paleographic knowledge of others,...



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