# JOHN NIXON, PIONEER OF THE STEAM COAL TRADE IN SOUTH WALES, A MEMOIR

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John Nixon, pioneer of the steam coal trade in south Wales, a memoir by James Edmund Vincent

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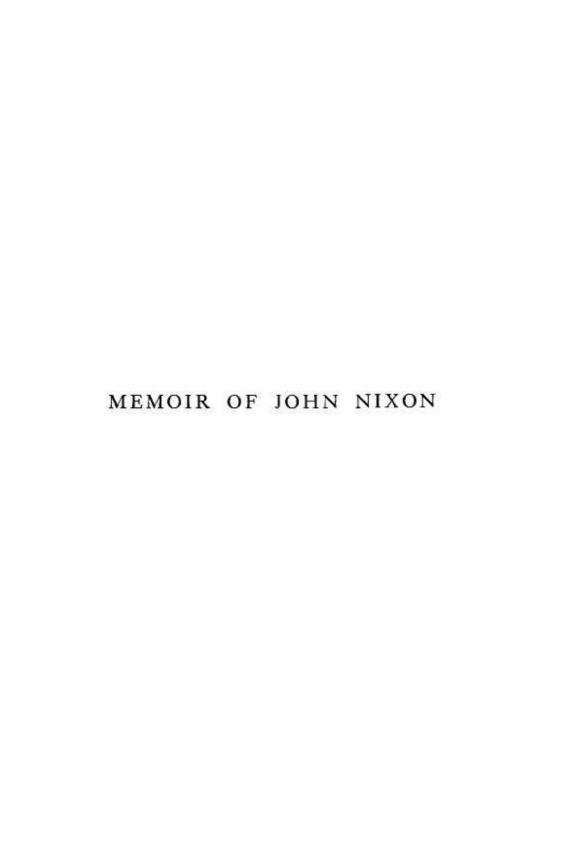
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## JAMES EDMUND VINCENT

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## JOHN NIXON

# PIONEER OF THE STEAM COAL TRADE IN SOUTH WALES

### A MEMOIR

BY

## JAMES EDMUND VINCENT

WITH A PORTRAIT

LONDON JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET
1900

## PREFACE

Mr. Nixon died, full of years and honour, before these pages were ready for publication, but the alterations required in the text have not been very considerable, for the probability of such an event was always present to me as I wrote. may be permitted to say that the duty of writing this brief Memoir of a successful man grew more and more interesting as it proceeded, not merely because it consisted in tracing the progress of the yeoman's son and colliery overman from the status of three-and-sixpence a day to that of a millionaire, but because of the striking incidents of that progress. Mr. Nixon's bold venture at Nantes, which laid the foundation of his fortunes, certainly partakes of the nature of the romance of commerce. He staked his all and he won, for he staked wisely. For the rest I have been interested mainly in the development and the manifestations of a character which commanded success. Nixon had his share of good fortune, no doubt; notably when he secured money at the nick of

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time at Werfa. He had something nearly approaching to genius in matters of mechanics and engineering, as he proved abundantly by his many inventions and in his valuable controversy with Sir John Rennie. But, for all that, his great success in life was the direct outcome of his strong character. Those qualities in him which were essentially moral, helped him not less than his acute intellect. He was cautious in forming judgments, but when formed they were far-seeing, and he followed them with unswerving His schemes were conceived on the courage. grand scale; they were carried out with indomitable energy and perseverance. "Fairness and firmness" was the abiding principle of his life; and in building his own fortunes he brought prosperity to many thousands of human beings. I thank Sir William Lewis, Mr. Nixon's life-long friend, and Mrs. Nixon, his sorrowing widow, for entrusting to me a very pleasant, if a very responsible, duty.

J. E. VINCENT.

CHELSEA, October 1899.

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