

*RSA Obituary, transcribed from 1850 RSA Annual Report*

Sir William Allan P.R.S.A., R.A was born in Edinburgh in 1782. He was apprenticed to Chrichton the coachbuilder, probably with a view to painting Coats of Arms, attended the Master Academy at the same time with Wilkie, and afterwards studied in London at the School of the Royal Academy.

Possessed of great activity and energy, and not meeting with much employment in London he determined, with a view to professional occupation and improvement, to travel by a route which had not been taken by any of his brother artists. Accordingly he went to St. Petersburg, where he met with a friend in Sir Alexander Chrichton, physician to the imperial family. He painted portraits in that City during a considerable period, and visited Tartary and Turkey, making sketches, and collecting materials for subjects illustrating these countries and the life and manners of the people.

"The Circassian Captives", (now in the Earl of Wemyss collection) "Exiles convoyed to Siberia" and similar subjects, some of which were purchased by the emperor Nicholas, were the fruits of his labours.

Having returned in 1814, he settled in Edinburgh, was elected as member of the Royal Academy of London, 1835, President of the Royal Scottish Academy in 1838 and, on Wilkie's death, was made limner to the Queen for Scotland, and Knighted in 1842.

Allan was on terms of friendly intimacy with Sir Walter Scott and other distinguished men of his time.

He held the appointment of Master of the Trustees School from 1826 till within a few years of his death, and his artistic feeling, and the high track of art he followed, operated favourably in stimulating the students, by whom he was looked up to with affection and respect.

He died in February 1850, having been engaged, till within a short time of his death, on his picture of the Battle of Bannockburn.