

William Grant Stevenson was a native of Ratho, Midlothian, where he was born on the 7<sup>th</sup> March 1849.

Educated at the Parish school he, like many artists, early showed the bent of his mind, the sketches on his reading- and copy-books affording a continual source of interest and amusement to his fellow-pupils.

Entering the Trustees' School at the Royal Institution, then under the direction of Mr. C. D. Hodder, Stevenson in three successive years gained one gold and two silver National Medals, and was generally regarded as the leading student of his time. He subsequently continued his studies at the Academy's Life School.

In 1869 Stevenson was awarded the Stuart Prize for a Relief of a Classical Subject; and he was only twenty-eight years of age, and still a student in the Academy's School when he won the Competition for the Burns' Statue (in marble) for Kilmarnock. Fresh and spontaneous in conception, this achievement marked the young sculptor out as an artist of exceptional promise.

An ardent admirer of the poet, he later followed his success by other statues of Burns which now form part of the Art Treasures of Chicago, Denver, Milwaukee and Fredericton (New Brunswick). In 1884 the statue of Wallace, Aberdeen, was his successful contribution to an open competition in which twenty-five sculptors, representing England, Scotland, France and Italy took part. The Wallace Statue, cast in bronze, is of colossal proportions.

Among several busts he was commissioned to execute in marble - several of them for the Grand Lodge of Scotland - are those of the Earl of Haddington, the Earl of Lindsay, Lord Newlands, Lord Blythswood, and many other men of note.

Besides his colossal works, Stevenson had executed small figures in silver, and his Diploma work is from the silver Statuette of a famous stag of twenty points.

Stevenson's talent was of a versatile order, and was not confined to one department of Art, for he regularly exhibited as a painter; his canvases being principally studies of animal life.

Literature also claimed part of his time and talent, and as a raconteur he was widely known, not only in Edinburgh, but throughout Scotland.

He was elected an Associate in 1885, and a full Academician in 1896.

His death took him at his residence, 8 Osborne Terrace, Edinburgh, on 6<sup>th</sup> May 1919.

***RSA Obituary, transcribed from the 1919 RSA Annual Report***