

Transcribed from the 1926 RSA Annual Report

Mr. Edwin Alexander, the only son of Robert Alexander, R.S.A., by his first wife, was born in Edinburgh in 1870 and received most of his education at Baillie's Academy and the Edinburgh Institution. From his earliest days he evidenced the keenest interest in animal life, and while still a boy acquired a real knowledge of botany.

At the age of 17 he accompanied his father on visit to Tangier, and, on his return, intermittently attended the Antique School under Mr. Hodder, and later spent some in Paris, studying with Fremiét, the great Sculptor. In 1902, with his friend, Erskine Nicol, Junr., he paid the first of two long visits to Egypt, when they worked together, mainly in the desert.

Mr. Alexander married Miss Dora Maclellan in 1904, and thereafter resided first at latterly at Links Lodge, Musselburgh. He was elected an Associate of the Academy in serious illness, aggravated by mental and physical strain in War time, around universal sympathy, and from 1918 till his death on 23rd April 1926, at the age of 56, his working powers were seriously crippled. Edwin Alexander's art was almost entirely confined to water-colour, which he utilised in a very personal manner; working sometimes not always, on toned paper—many of his finest drawings are painted on linen—he used body colour freely but with the greatest discretion.

Passion he seems to have distinctly avoided; the full gamut of colour never appears in his work, which suggests the muted tones of the violin. Within these limitations, and even on account of them, one feels in every production of his hand, however slight, a very special refinement of vision, an abiding love for the beauty of simple things, unerring selection of the significant in form and disposition.

Alexander was a valued member of the Royal Society of Painters in Water-Colours, and the Royal Scottish Society. Of individual works from his hand may be mentioned "Arab Boy with Donkeys," his diploma picture at the Royal Scottish Academy; "A Peacock," in the Tate Gallery; "The Vulture," the property of The Marquess of Bute, K.T.; and "Resting Hound," in the collection of Wm. HomeCook, Esq.