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Arthur A. Schomburg

The Man Who Built His Own Monument -

by

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Arthur A. Schomburg -

"The Man Who Built His Own Monument"

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My Friends -

We met^x here tonight to commemorate the life and mourn the death of a noble character, Arthur A. Schomburg, in life a genius devoted to an unusual calling.

I come tonight not to tell the story of his life - that is the task of others. I come with a simpler task. I come as a representative of the American Negro Academy to emphasize the thought that Schomburg in life built his own monument and above that to testify by the fact of my participation in the exercises to my esteem and admiration for him and to the personal love I bore him.

Last June I was among those who bore our friend to his final resting place. In a beautiful and tranquil "city of the dead" he was laid away and left to eternal rest.

This occasion is more than a mere tribute to the

memory of our departed friend. Such occasions give opportunity to recall an honorable and successful life, and to point out that men can rise to eminence in other fields than business, law, medicine, politics and the like.

Most men in life strive for success. They may have different standards of life which they adopt.

Some seek glory through wealth. Others seek great power - still others fame, conspicuous places along varied lines. Some seek to explore the realms of ^{science} ~~seeing~~; others to become gifted orators; others to be known as great statesmen; others, great pulpit speakers; and still others, merchant princes in the marts of the world.

Most men desire to be known as conspicuous examples of success according to their ideas of what constitutes success in life. These things being true, we of the Academy can select no more fitting an epitaph for Schomburg's tombstone than-

"Here lies a man that built his
own monument."

Look about you. Here as Curator his deepest interest clustered. And here his most loving memorial has been reared.

Here you see the accumulation of his industry, enterprise and long years of patient and continuous research. Here you see that which does and will combine to benefit thousands.

What we say here tonight in commemoration of Schomburg's life and public service may not live long - but here we see and thousands of others from year to year will continue to look upon, consult and appreciate what has been gathered here. Here tonight we have been testifying to his high character, his high place in semi-public life and to his many virtues.

My friends, when the last leaf is turned and the book of life falls idly to the ground, we pause and think.

It matters little how long life is - it matters most how life is lived. Even if a man lives to be four-score, his life work will be left incomplete- but dying in middle life. Arthur Schomburg has left a lasting impression.

It is said there are three kinds of praise, that which we yield, that which we lend, and that which we pay. We yield it to the powerful from fear, we lend it to the weak from interest, but we pay it to the deserving from gratitude.

It is from appreciation of his life work that we gather tonight to commemorate Schomburg. His decease is beyond doubt as irreparable loss to his race and the city of his adoption.

The many who will daily visit this library, and the thousands who will annually seek information and make research here will return home more proud of his genius in inaugurating and more thankful and patriotic to the City of New York for its generous maintenance of the "Schomburg Collection," the fruit of long years of research which will make it easier for others to delve into History - the most prolific of all studies.

Look about you.

As a mason gathers stone and marble to erect monuments to others - Schomburg from day to day, from month to month, and from year to year gathered this valuable collection of rare volumes. Here my friends, you see a monument not of brass, stone or marble, but a monument built of books and other priceless documents that fully typify and emphasize Schomburg's ideal of a successful career.

Should he be commemorated by a statue of marble or brass, the City of New York or others could not have erected a more enduring monument to his memory and genius than by the maintenance of this collection- his life work, where it can be consulted at all times.

We of the Academy join in the full chorus of respect and affection for Schomburg, the genial character, affable companion and cherished friend - The man who Built His Own Monument. It is with just pride that we are permitted to wear a garland to his memory.

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