

his sons or successors quarrel among themselves as to who should manage it". He points out frankly many other shortcomings of his people and exhorts them to frugality, honesty of purpose, self-reliance and patriotism. Those who know him are well aware there could be no better preacher, for, throughout his long life, he has practised

every precept he preaches with a vigour which is beyond admiration—yet how many heed his advice? True reform must come from within; until the individual learns that service to others is as vital as self-interest, no Government on earth can bring prosperity in place of poverty and misery.
H. E. W.

Shabti Figures

Shabtis

Illustrated by the Egyptian Collection in University College, London: with Catalogue of Figures from many other Sources. By Sir Flinders Petrie. (British School of Archaeology in Egypt and Egyptian Research Account, Forty-first Year, 1935.) Pp. x+16+45 plates. (London: British School of Egyptian Archaeology, and Bernard Quaritch, Ltd., 1935.) 25s.

IN this volume, which forms part of the series of monographs planned by the author to cover the development of the principal departments in the civilization of ancient Egypt, Sir Flinders Petrie has surveyed from its origins the history of the custom of placing one or more small representations of the mummy in the tomb. The survey is more complete than any previous study that has been attempted, and covers not only the collection at University College, London, numbering 650 examples, but also a further 565 from the Italian and other museums. In addition to the register or catalogue of these, there is a corpus of the inscriptions, and the types are illustrated in a series of excellent photographs.

In an analysis of the material which precedes the catalogue, Sir Flinders first examines the evidence bearing on the origin of the custom. Although the ushabti figure, properly speaking, does not appear until the Twelfth Dynasty, he traces the conception from which it grew back to the pre-dynastic custom of separating the skull from the disarticulated bones and burying it either in an unnatural relation to them, or above the pile of stones which covered them. Evidently burial had been delayed in order to secure the help of the ancestral spirit, possibly by keeping the skull in the house. Analogous customs of West Africa are quoted in support. By the Twelfth Dynasty the idea of the terrestrial habitation for the soul, involving the provision of house, furniture and other appurtenances of a life on earth, had given place to a translation to the realm of Osiris, where not only were pleasures to be enjoyed, but also duties had to be performed. When once the conception had gained currency

that such duties were the function of the ushabti figure, it was only a step, though it was not a step taken until the end of the Eighteenth and beginning of the Nineteenth Dynasties, to the idea that the ushabti was not a representation of the deceased, but a slave. Then the one figure, hitherto single, except in Royal burials, took on added numbers, until it was necessary to include overseers with whips. In the later dynasties there were frequently so many as four hundred or just under. The duties the shabti figures were to perform were by *nḏ* means light: originally the weaving of cloth, to this was added the carrying of sand and later the cultivation of the soil. Sir Flinders, by his study of the date at which variations in the inscriptions on the shabti appear, is able to trace the development at various periods in the conception which inspired their use.

The material from which the shabti figures were made varies from stone to wood, and even mud was used. The most familiar form is perhaps that made of pottery and covered with blue or green glaze. The form varies in like manner, and at times becomes almost shapeless.

In connexion with the use of wood for a figure with magical properties, Sir Flinders refers to the Greek parody of the idea in Lucian in the story in which a magician turns a piece of wood or a household article into a servant to perform any function for which he requires it, and then transforms it back again, the jest being that the teller of the story, knowing part of the formula, sets an animated piece of wood to carry water, but being unable to make it stop, cuts it in two and doubles the danger of inundation. Sir Flinders tells us that the story has been revived in a modern French symphonic poem; but there are many other versions. It was a familiar story in the Middle Ages and is told of a pupil of the thirteenth-century magician, Michael Scott, who tried to emulate his master. It is interesting to note that the duty of carrying sand associated with the dead in the realm of Osiris, also appears in connexion with Michael Scott, who set the Devil to carry sand on the shores of Fife.