

moulds, were intended by the pious donor to take the place of those sacred relics which every tower of this sort is by traditional theory supposed to cover.

On the opposite side of the walled town, about 400 yards from its north-west corner, and just outside what appears to have been an outer enclosure, two massive clay structures close together attracted my attention. They looked like small forts, forming squares with sides about sixty feet long. The walls, fully twenty feet thick, rose to a considerable height, but curiously enough showed neither a proper entrance nor any stairs or other arrangement for reaching their top. Making my way to the interior through a gap which had formed where the massive rampart had parted at one of the corners, I searched in vain for any remains to explain the purpose of these strange structures, until I noticed, lying loose on the sand which half-filled the enclosure, some fissured planks. Their length was just that needed for the boards of a coffin, and I had scarcely communicated my conjecture to the two Ch'iao-tzŭ men who were with me, when by scraping away the sand in one corner they laid bare similar planks still *in situ* enclosing a skeleton. It was clear that these extraordinarily massive walls had served to protect, not living people, but an abode of the dead; and an inspection of the ground outside, where left bare by drift sand and consequently eroded, soon showed that it had all once been used as a cemetery. Small fragments of human bones were all that erosion had spared of the graves.

The question as to the water-supply which the town and the cultivated area near it must have once commanded, presented, of course, a special interest. It could not possibly have come from the spring-fed marshes, the drainage of which now irrigates the Ch'iao-tzŭ oasis; for a look at the ground showed that these springs lay considerably below the level of the 'Tati' ground southward. The barren gravel glacis, as seen from So-yang-chêng sloping up for miles to the foot of the hill range, showed no clear trace of any stream. But as I rode over the strangely scoured ground east of the town, with its steep little clay terraces and intervening depressions recalling