

to the cave, for Orientals seldom have any curiosity to discover the reason of phenomena. I was more curious, so I ascended the spur with my Pathan servant, and, reaching the rock, clambered up that, the last twenty feet in cat-like fashion, without boots, and clinging on with toes and fingers only; for the rock, just for that final bit, was almost perpendicular. We entered the mouth of the cave. I looked eagerly round to discover the source of the light, and, when I had got fairly on my legs, found that the cave was simply a hole right through the rock, and that the light came in from the other side. From below, of course, this cannot be seen, for the observer merely sees the top of the cave, and this, being covered with some white deposit, reflects back the light which has come in from the opening on the other side. This, then, was the secret of the Cave of Perpetual Light, which I am told is mentioned in histories many hundreds of years old.

We encamped that night by a few Kirghiz yurts, in an extensive grassy plain to the east of Rang-kul, and away at the end of the plain could be seen the magnificent snow mass of the Mustagh-ata, the Father of Mountains, twenty-five thousand feet in height.

The ordinary route to Kashgar, to which place we were now making, leads on eastward from Rang-kul over the Ak-berdi Pass, and down the Gez River. But I was anxious to visit the Great Kara-kul Lake, so I pushed northward through the depressingly barren hills which bound the Rang-kul Lake, and encamped the first night at the foot of the Kizil Jek Pass. Up till now we had been fortunate enough always to have yurts put up for us at each halting-place, and these thick felt-walled tents, with a fire inside them, can be made really very comfortably warm. At any rate, you have the fire, and can warm yourself thoroughly when you want to. But a thin canvas tent, in which a fire cannot be lighted, is a