

## THE GRAND TETON

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This is an account of a fairly easy climb which went without any sensational hitches, but it is offered on the principle that the technical difficulty of what is worth writing about varies inversely with its distance from Birmingham.

The Grand Teton (13,766 feet) is one of the Rocky Mountains. It stands in the Teton National Park in North West Wyoming, high country which is readily accessible only during the short summer season when cloudless blue skies combine with its other natural resources to create splendid facilities for mountaineering, fishing and playing at cowboys. The opportunity to climb it came while we were enjoying an idyllic year as guests of the University of California at Berkeley. The Tetons were only a thousand miles away, so what were we waiting for? We piled into our car and went.

As we approached the Tetons we came first to the town of Jackson, where the amateur cowboys were out in force, the less experienced ones trying not to fall over their spurs, the bolder square-dancing in the street. We pushed on to Jenny Lake, at the feet of the big peaks, where we pitched our tents among the pine trees. The woods were full of friendly bears who delighted Nicola, the youngest member of the party. She was one and a half years old and had already been up (in a rucksack) such peaks as Half Dome (8,852 feet) in California. She spent all her time running after the bears and calling "teddy."

Having obeyed the local rules by registering our intentions with the Park Rangers, Brian Smith and I left our women and children in the camp and set off towards our mountain. We walked up to the head of a narrow valley called Garnet Canyon, past the tiny Middle Teton Glacier and up a short rock wall to the Lower Saddle (11,644 feet), the col between the Grand and Middle Tetons. As we came over the crest of the ridge we met a roaring westerly gale, so we dived under an overhanging rock which cramped our movements very effectively without offering much shelter. As the sun sank all too quickly in the West we set about trying to persuade our stove to light and convert a dehydrated stew into something more or less edible.

As soon as it was light we tried to face a nominal breakfast and crawled thankfully out of our hole. The route we had chosen went up a magnificent rock ridge which we reached above its steep lower section by a traverse over a sensational ledge known appropriately enough as "Wall Street." The rest of the way consisted of long slabs

of firm granite which were already delightfully warm in the morning sunshine. The neighbouring peaks slowly fell away beneath us, and we were soon on the summit where we met a party led by Glenn Exum, the original discoverer of our route. We basked for an hour or so, gazing at an assortment of States which lay beneath our feet, before starting our descent by the ordinary route. We avoided its only difficulties by means of a long free rappel and rattled briskly down the rest of the way to our families and a refreshing swim in the lake.

The following evening we got into our big, powerful American car and drove down to civilisation where we celebrated our climb with big, powerful American Martinis.

