

Jed smith trailblazer of the west by frank latham

Literature



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Jed Smith Trailblazer of the West by Frank Latham

The novel ' Jed Smith Trailblazer of the West' is one of the highly rated works of literature that ever came from Frank Latham. Published by the Christian Liberty Press, the novel introduces a young fascinating character in an American history setting to the readers. Jed Smith, though young, was full of ambitious and dared at anything in order to pursue and achieve his dreams. The pursuit was not as easy as he could have wished; he faced several obstacles such as hostile Indian tribes, dangerous terrain, and grizzly bears just like the rest of the settlers who were moving to the west beyond the Rocky Mountains into what the author termed as the " wilderness territory". Jed Smith, known as the trailblazer stood out in the novel as being a skilled trapper, daring explorer and a dedicated Christian. As a young man growing up in a harsh world, he stopped at nothing to live his dreams which he believed were given to him by God. As a result, he ended up blazing a trail of honor and achievement. His story as well as his Christian testimony make the novel as amazing as a real life situation (Latham 57).

Latham introduces the opening chapter in a fictitious way so as to keep his readers hooked up anticipating an action adventure. In the rest of the chapters, Latham changes his style of writing by introducing interesting historical narrative which blended so well with fictional dialogue in an effort to keep this hero genre interesting. Through the book, Latham accurately portrays the American history dating back to the early 1820's (Latham 120). Through the novel, the reader becomes aware of most of the exploration events that took place in American history especially to the west. Smith became the first white man to ever crossed Utah and Nevada. He was also the first American to get to California using land means.

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The story revolves around Jed as a hunter, explorer, trapper and mountain man. Through him, the traits of other characters are brought out. The man Jed was keeping company happened to be the opposite of him. He was a teetotaler, clean shaven, always with his Bible, and spoke in a clean language. Jed also determines the plot of the novel as it starts with him when he sets off heading to the “ faraway land” and ends when Jed decides to settle down. The main themes in the novel also develop through him; war, and religion. Jed was a religious man and believed that everything that happened was according to God’s plans. The man Jed was keeping company was also religious as he prayed and read his bible everyday.

‘ Jed Smith Trailblazer of the West’ stands out as being a very interesting book with trails of one adventure after the other excluding the boring life bits like in most of the novels. As a character, Jed was also interesting. He was a strong believer of Christianity filled with empathy for the people around him yet easily jumped to using his fists whenever needed. Jed also showed some bit of compassion to the Indians while he was travelling. He was also authoritative, always ordering the men around him to behave (Latham 89). The book is not meant for every eye as it is sensitive to age. It is mainly meant for the young generation. Some readers consider it as being one sided as in most of the battles, Jed’s men lost to the Indians. In terms of religion, the novel is unabashedly Christian. Though Jed was a strong believer and talked about Christianity to the men around him, he didn’t criticize the non believers or the other faiths. I would recommend this book for juvenile readers who are in grades five to eight as it is highly interesting and educative.

Work Cited

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Latham, Frank. Jed Smith Trailblazer Of The West. New York: Christian Liberty Press, 2000. Print