

# HEART MATTERS

NON SCHOLÆ SED VITÆ

*Libraries of Hope Newsletter*

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## MONTHLY TOPICS

Are you ready for our next stop on our tour of the world? If not, feel free to linger a little longer wherever you may have landed.

But if you are ready to move on, this month we are visiting the British Isles. Her children in the colonies are getting pretty fed up with her overbearing ways and are starting to think of breaking free and becoming an independent nation. But it is with great reluctance. They love their Mother Country. And with good reason! It was a beautiful land and had been a land of chivalry—the land of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round table. It was the home to the literary and poetic giants of the world—Shakespeare and Milton and Chaucer and the glorious reign of Queen Elizabeth. To fight against England was to fight against family.

But the fight for freedom was more important to them and worth sacrificing their lives, homes and reputations. At least to some of them--a third of the colonists never gave up their allegiance to England. Another third were fence sitters. It was a small ragtag army that eventually won the day.

Scotland and Ireland also joined in their own fights for freedom and that same spirit was found in many of the Patriot fighters on our own land. And that little emerald island in the sea—Ireland—became a beacon of light when the rest of Europe turned dark. You might say she saved civilization.

There are so many charming and enchanting things to explore this month. England, herself, was never our enemy—only selfish and short-sighted rulers, which seems to be the case in most of the world’s conflicts, doesn’t it?

Our Nature topic is Rocks. In our continuing story of the Creation, it was the working of the water upon the rocks that began to build the soil where things could grow. Kind of like the working of our hearts on cold hard facts where learning can grow. There’s a lot of story stored in the rocks for those

“A LOVE OF LEARNING  
HAS A LOT TO DO  
WITH LEARNING  
THAT WE’RE LOVED.”

--FRED ROGERS

(Monthly Topics cont.) with eyes to see and understand.

And our Mother's University topic is Music. I started to say one of my favorite topics, but they are all my favorite topic. I've been learning a lot about the power of music in our lives through my Harp Therapy Certification Training. Of course, the harp and Ireland go together. I'll have to share some of the lessons I've learned throughout the month. Do spend time in the Mother's Learning Library volume on Music if you have the time to learn more on why Music Matters in our lives. Where will your journeys take you?

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

--I've mentioned it before--one of my most favorite books about the life of Jesus Christ is *The Life of Christ* by Frederic Farrar written in 1874. It's not light reading, but so satisfying. Another favorite author on the life of Christ, James Talmage, drew heavily from it.

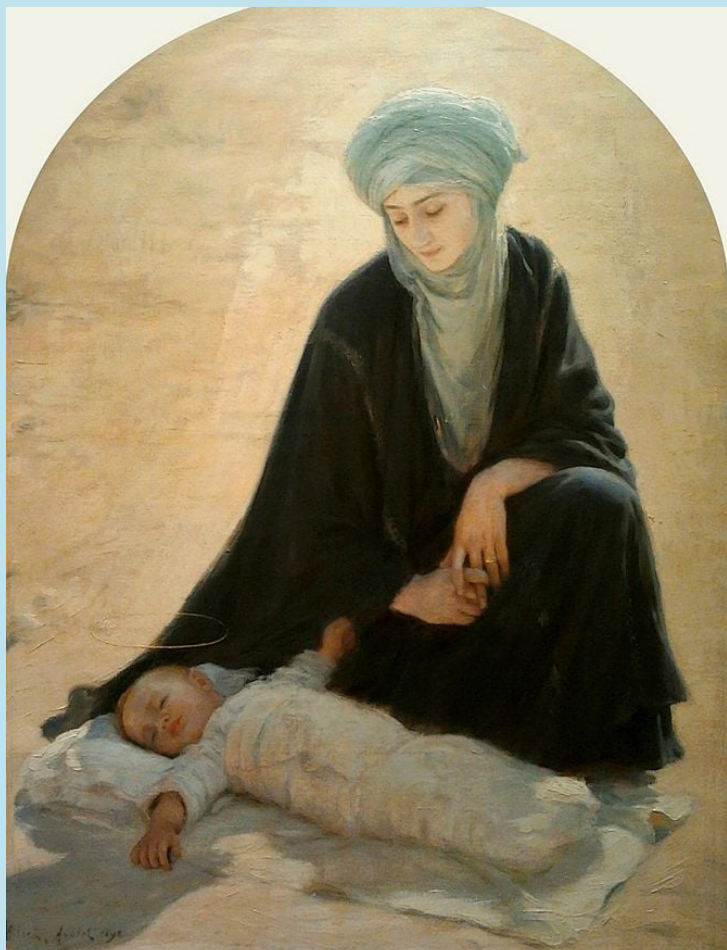
Later I discovered another edition that included lots of fine art woven into the text and it was renamed: *The Story of a Beautiful Life*. It's on Internet Archive, but I found a used copy and decided I wanted to go through it again, this time a little more slowly. So... I decided to record it.

The first chapter is now in [mybelmonde.com](http://mybelmonde.com). It's in Month 6, Holy Land under Great Lives. I'm going to add one chapter a week for the next 62 weeks--my Sunday afternoon project, is the plan.

And then I wondered how I could share the fine art that is included. Not all of them are available, but I am looking for those that are and am throwing in a few additional ones in a Fine Art Gallery I set up. You'll see the link just under the title of the book. If you find something you want to print up, the name and artist should appear and you can search in Wikimedia Commons or I found a couple of 4000 Jesus Pictures Gallery.

If you are accessing it on your phones, you'll have to scroll through My Bible Story Book to get to it.

The first chapter is The Nativity. Notice the age of Joseph in the paintings.



Art credit: Arabic Madonna and Child by Albert Aublet

Many centuries ago, a ruler of Arabia gave a celebration in honor of the birth of a son. Friends came from far and near bearing gifts of gold and fine raiment. One young sage came with a peculiar gift.

Said he, "Each day of your son's life, from the time he can understand until he reaches manhood, I shall tell him stories that will make him both wise and good."

The storyteller did as he promised, and when this baby became a man and a ruler in his father's stead, he became famous throughout the East because of his wisdom and noble deeds. Then his teacher-storyteller wrote upon a scroll (which, it is said, can be seen among a collection of manuscripts at Budapest today): "It was because of the seed sown by the tales."

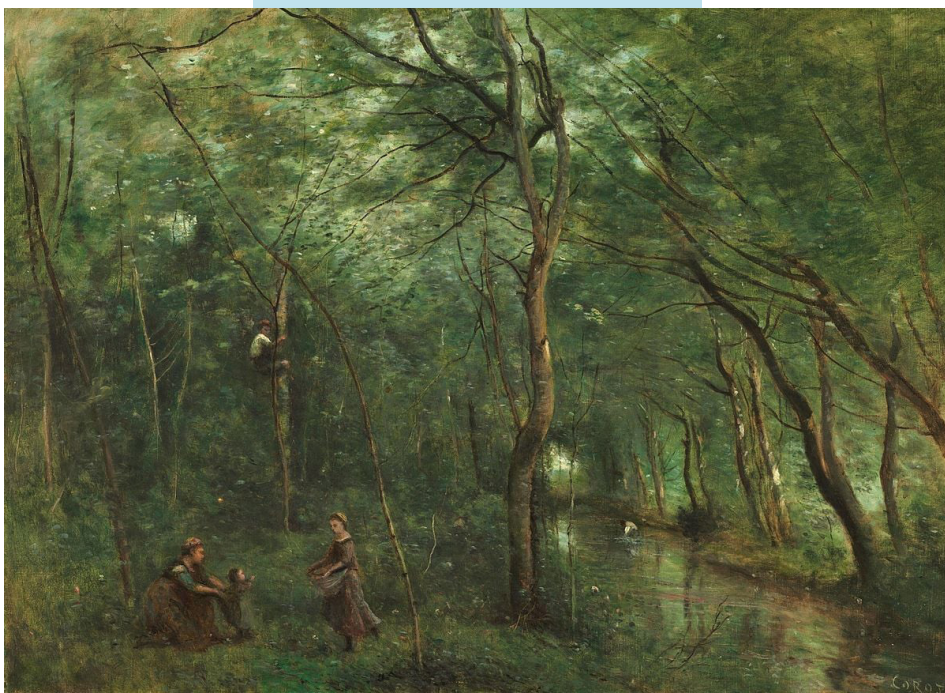
"The more of heroes children know,  
the more like heroes they will become."

--From *Storytelling* by Claudia Royal

“The value of Nature Study should not be measured by the Acquisition of knowledge, but rather by the love and the profound reverence for the design and the protecting care revealed in the works and sky by an all-wise Creator.”

--Anna McGovern

Art credit: The Eel Gatherers by Corot



## WEH IN ACTION

--I have nine children, the three oldest newly adopted from Bulgaria. I have been using WEH for about 1 year, going on our second year. Because of the language barrier, we focus a lot of our time on art, music, and nature. I mix in poetry and stories in unique ways. We use poetry for copy work and with our poetry tea time. Then I use movies a lot for stories because it helps them understand the story when they see the pictures and it is good for them learning English. It has been amazing seeing things they are doing and how it is warming their hearts.

The oldest was reading in the scriptures while I was gone and all on her own, without me even discussing note-booking, she took a chapter and did a notebook page of it with a drawing and little notes in Bulgarian about the chapter she read. It almost made me cry to see it. It was beautiful!

Then we watched John Muir Law's first video about nature Journaling and then I sent them out into nature to nature journal. It was so cool. My oldest son found a flower and he documented details about it and drew pictures of it. Then he wanted to try to find out what the name of it was so he could write it down. We searched for a while, but finally we found it. All the kids found awesome things and it was so neat watching how they were trying to really see the details of the things and get to know them. It is a beautiful thing because nature teaches so much to the heart.

Then yesterday I pulled Freckles off my shelf to read. I hadn't read it yet, but it had been calling to me. I kept thinking, I need to read that book. So yesterday was the day and I can tell you that I LOVE IT so much!! I am so glad I started reading it, it is such a beautiful heart warming book. I am only in chapter three, but it is beautiful! Do yourself a favor, read it.

Another thing I started doing was having a rough idea of things I wanted to do each week, but more importantly writing down what I actually did at the end of each day. I realized that it helps me to see how much I am actually doing that I forget and it makes me recognize the successes each day.

I love WEH so much! I feel my heart growing softer little by little and I see how much it is softening the hearts of my children. It isn't all rainbows and sunshine every day, but that is part of life. I know this is helping us in so many ways and I am so thankful for it. I just wanted to share a little bit of the bright spots that have encouraged me along on my journey and hopefully it will help you too!

--One thing I like about the rotation is reading stories that are similar throughout different cultures. This morning we read a Spanish fairy tale that is very similar to Beauty and the Beast. It's called Lily and the Bear in the Tales of Spain and Holland in the Imaginative Series. My kids said they all like this version better because at least the

(WEH in Action cont.) sisters are nice!

--I've been reading the Delphian and Catch the Vision in the mornings and I always love to share quotes with my husband.

To my shock and amazement, today he turned to me and said, "I have a quote I think you'll like...."

"Education is the kindling of the flame, not the filling of a vessel."  
-- Socrates

Which tied in perfectly with some Delphian readings I shared with him last week:

"True education must begin and continue with a fine disregard of pecuniary returns....The educated man is a new man. It is not merely that he knows more. There is something in him which was not there when his education began. And this something gives him a new relation to the past, of which it is the fruit, and to the future, of which it is the promise. It is of the nature of an original force which draws its energy from a new contact with the world and with mankind, and which distributes its power throughout life in all its channels."

You should know, this is not usual

for my husband. He's a great listener when a good quote must be read out loud but he never participates more than that. This morning was different; he connected some dots.

I say this to the fellow wives whose husbands may not be onboard, or whose teenagers feel "too far gone." Kindle your flame and then share that light and its warmth. Even when it seems futile it's not, keep doing it with a "disregard for return." You may not see it right away, but they hear you, they see you.

--So while planning for next month's rotation you know what I figured out!?? Everything flows together. There is no need to separate history from science or geography etc. Its all one big story. I have been so worried about doing this WEH thing perfect and scheduling everything out and worrying about whats next that I forgot what is right now and right in front of me. I have been stressing about the what ifs... what if I forget to cover this or do that...then I realized I am in my mid forties and I am just now learning some of these things myself!! (Can you believe that I have never read/watched The Hobbit or The Lord of the Rings? My kids love them both but I have never taken the time. I am diving in next month!) They have a whole lifetime to learn

anything that I missed. I am super excited to relax a bit and just enjoy.

--My 6-year-old has been fascinated by all things space for 2-3 years now. He's read everything he can find about stars, black holes, space travel, etc., mostly in our different space encyclopedias and such. Anyway... Even though he has already enjoyed it, I loved watching it touch his heart last month as we read the stories of the stars, the legend of the big dipper, and even snuck into the kids room late at night, woke them up, and took them stargazing in the back yard. He came running in just now to show me his latest building project--it's meant to be the constellation Leo. It made me so happy that it touched his heart, and that he's now applying things he learned in his life and play.

--I wanted to share a lovely success we've had this month and to invite you to share your learnings with family members. My Father and sister in law both served church missions in the Netherlands. I invited them both to share some fun traditions/culture/anything they wanted to with our family. My sister in law prepared a beautiful document with gorgeous art work, pictures of her adventures there, recipes, etc. My father spent a video chat sharing more pictures,



Art credit: A Dame's School by Thomas George Webster

(WEH in Action cont.) stories about Rembrandt's "Night Watch" being slashed by a knife in 1983, a beloved Christmas song, and geography facts.

It was so wonderful to invite family members into our learning. It became personal and helped my children see they could learn from wonderful people who love them. I don't know that I know someone who has visited every country we will explore, but I am going to set a goal to seek out opportunities to invite grandparents, aunts, and uncles to share things they love and know with us. I hope you'll join me and strengthen relationships all while learning--what could be more heart warming?

## WEH GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS

--[The Wheel on the School](#) by Meindert De Jong. We are about 1/3 of the way into this book but thought I'd share it with the group. Such a fun read that shows all the ways learning happens when you engage with children and roll with it. And even some examples of hearts being softened to each other.

--Don Quixote Royal Ballet: <https://youtu.be/5fKxzQ8ARTQ>

--[The Winter King and the Summer Queen](#) by Mary Lister

--[Pirates of Penzance](#)

--We just finished reading [Understood Betsy](#) and it was absolutely beautiful. I was talking to my 7 year old about the differences in this book and another book she has been reading. She said that the other book was exciting and adventurous and *Understood Betsy* made her want to learn more. I feel that way too! It made me want to learn how to sew, to learn more about American History, and it made me want to learn how to say less and be a little braver when things feel unpredictable. I love this book! It is absolutely worth looking into. I loved the podcast Marlene did about the author too, it is [podcast #193](#) entitled "The Art of Living Happily."

## MARLENE'S MUSINGS

--I'm taking some time today to go through some boxes I brought home after going through my parents' things and found a leather bound volume gifted to my grandfather in 1934. I remember seeing it on my dad's nightstand. Guess what it is....notebooking:) It's called [Elbert Hubbard's Scrap Book](#): Containing the inspired and inspiring selections gathered during a life time of discriminating reading for his own use. In the Foreward, you read: "When Elbert Hubbard was storing up in his Scrap Book the fruits of other's genius, he did not contemplate a volume for publication. He was merely gathering spiritual provisions for his own refreshment and delectation."

As someone commented in Goodreads, it is something many of us do. "We collect the 'nuggets' of truth that we connect with and put them in a safe place where we can revisit them from time to time."

That's it. The idea behind notebooking is that simple.

How you organize your scrapbooks of wisdom is up to you. I've shared some of the ways I've been doing mine.

You can view his scrapbook in Internet Archive. Maybe it will inspire you to start your own if you haven't yet.

--I was thinking about how frustrating it can be to have an unrealized ideal for your home. You love your kids and want them to be happy! But sometimes they are so darned uncooperative. Your dreams of a beautiful, peaceful home environment are shattered by noise and messiness and kids with minds of their own!

I often worry that I'm adding to guilt because I put this ideal home out there that, for many of us, is really quite unattainable. But as I was thinking about that, something else I read from the Oceans book came to mind:

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(Marlene's Musings cont.) "Even when the waters are at their stillest they are always being drawn steadily towards Earth's centre. A perfectly level ocean would mean each portion of its surface being equally distant from that centre. The ocean ever strives after this ideal, but never attains to it; yet, century after century that aim is pursued, with a perseverance which might afford a lesson to ourselves." And...

"Most of us have noticed a cup filled with water, that the water-surface is not perfectly flat. Close to the sides of the cup may be noticed a distinct rise. It is the same in a tumbler, in a basin, in a slender glass tube. For the sides of the cup or tumbler or tube attract the water, drawing it upward; and this is known as Capillary Attraction." [That's a good heart word.]

"With the ocean the very same thing is seen. If high land borders on deep water, the extra attraction of mountain-masses will act just as the sides of a cup or tumbler will act. They draw upward the water of the ocean to a higher level."

So maybe the answer is to allow these higher ideals to lift you higher and constantly draw you, without feeling like you are a failure if you haven't achieved the perfect outcome. The more I learn, the more I understand there is really no arrival moment in God's plan. He plans on lifting us higher and higher and higher--will that pull ever end? Only if we let go and stop trying.



--In searching for images for the next volume of My World Story Book, I came across this 1909 painting by an unknown artist. I love it! It's called "Homer Teaches Dante, Shakespeare and Goethe to Sing."

It reminded me of what I talked about in the last podcast, "[Angels Among Us](#)." It really is the works of the past that teach us how to 'sing' our songs today. Would there have been a Dante, Shakespeare or a Goethe without a Homer?

--I've had something on my mind

and I think lessons from this month's topics of the Ocean and from Spain and the Pilgrims may offer clues to the answer.

There have been times I have dreamed of living in a community of like-minded people. Wouldn't that be nice to be with people who have your same values so you can avoid all the contention and 'bad' influences on your children? Some people seek to create that environment in their home. It seems like a worthy desire.

That dream of establishing a 'utopia' has played out repeatedly throughout history--but not with a good result. Why is that?

Let's first look at lessons from the Ocean. Starting on p. 130 of [Stories of the Ocean](#) in the Forgotten Classics, you read:

"Things are what they are in this world very largely because of the pull of opposing forces, and among such forces not one is more universal than that of Gravity...if Weight were banished from our midst, the Earth as we know it would exist no longer. ...

"When ocean-waters lie still as a mill-pond, they do so through an exact poise of contending powers. When waves

(*Marlene's Musings cont.*) rush high and currents pour strongly, each movement is still in strict obedience to governing forces, which are themselves governed by law. Each movement is due to a long series of past movements; and each in turn helps to bring about a long series of future movements. There are no breaks in the chain. Every effect is also a cause.

“Currents here and drifts there; breezes here and hurricanes there; all these disturb the calm of the sea. Only for a brief spell, in one part or another, is the pull of opposing forces so far balanced that the water can lie still. And at most the stillness is comparative. Even in a so-called “dead calm” gentle heavings to and fro will be found. Absolute placidity in the ocean is a thing unknown.”

Can we successfully eliminate opposing forces in our lives with good effect? Is it even wise to do so?

Queen Isabella of Spain gave it a try. She purged her country of everyone of a different faith than her own....and killed her country.

The Pilgrims' Dream was a little haven of heaven as they perceived it. They definitely brought opposing forces on board the Mayflower with them and I can't help but wonder if that was a necessary part of laying the foundation that was laid--that strength comes pushing against those opposing forces, not from ease. In fact, it seems like William Bradford said that himself. I'll have to go back and see if I can find his quote.

Aren't we seeing a push today to 'cancel' people with opposing ideas? The lessons of the sea teach us that's not a great idea.

I'm not fully settled on the topic, but maybe I need to find me a nice spot on a beach somewhere and spend more time contemplating the Laws of Nature at work. Anyone want to join me?

“Nothing useless is or low,  
Each thing in its place is best,  
And what seems but idle show  
Strengthens and supports the rest.”  
--Longfellow

--In the midst of so many divisions, art has the power to bring us together because it addresses our common human experience.

Art lifts us up. “...from a high position, you will see the larger scale of things, and it's often quite striking how similar one side is to the other... Yet other-side thinking causes us to focus on differences rather than the similarities.”



Art credit: from Portraits in the Characters of the Muses by Richard Samuel

Art is a universal approach “to see things from a thousand feet up. Art in any form...can give us a new perspective, more holistic and more inclusive.”

One of the great virtues of art is that it can tell a story “in a subtle and human way. It can connect one person's mortal experience to another's... Expression through art is one of the ways we can help bridge the divide. Art can transmit a message of hope, light and truth...” --Dieter Uchtdorf

It makes me think of the story of two bitter enemies out on the battlefield, coming together on a Christmas Eve, singing Silent Night. Same thing happened on the Civil War battlefield in the singing of Home Sweet Home.

(Marlene's Musings cont.) I think of the mom in our group whose family had been torn apart in their differing religious views, but a discussion of the Arts brought them back together.

The Arts are what can bring together diverse people in your neighborhood into MOI groups.

The Arts can heal our world.

--I was just browsing an old book written to Jewish women with suggestions for keeping a love of their faith alive in their children. In an imaginary interchange between two women, I read:

"You can read, study about Judaism. You can't get much out of books. You've got to just feel these things --and believe them--if you want to make your children believe in them, too. It's the mother's work."

This is why I can't prescribe a curriculum or tell you which books to read and guarantee you'll have the outcome you are looking for. Most of the vital lessons are going to be relayed through the power and influence of your own personality, which is why we focus so much on tending to mothers' hearts in this group.



Art credit: Großmutter's Märchen by Paul Wagner

--I saw an announcement this morning that The Good and the Beautiful is discontinuing their History curriculum as they work on a major overhaul, which won't be available for a couple of years.

Among the changes is a column with 'hard facts.' Also more instruction in how to discern what is true and what isn't, along with more diversity.

As I pondered this, along with the discussions of the last few days, the thought came into my mind: "The tempest and the storms are only on the surface of the water. Go deep where it is still and calm."

The older writers were more concerned with 'Truth' than 'True.' In an old book about the Lost Books of the Bible, it says: "It must be remembered that such a thing as historical accuracy is a comparatively novel product. The older writers never dreamed of it. They wrote in order to be interesting, not to tell the truth."

I keep saying it--there are comparatively few 'facts' that history has left us. We learn far more about the Greeks from their mythology than from artifacts. Even original sources are filtered through someone's point of view.

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(*Marlene's Musings cont.*) If we keep studying history at the surface level of 'facts' and 'historical accuracy,' we're going to find ourselves in the storms of conflict.

I say go deeper. Historians need to be concerned with facts. But I'm not an historian. I'm a student of life.

I have great respect for the work of Audrey Rindlisbacher. We are aligned in so many ways. She teaches moms to look for principles as they study. I call them 'gems.' Gems are the life lessons buried in the stories of history--whether factually correct or not.

How do you know if they are true? You put them into practice and watch the fruit. If it's good fruit, it's a keeper. It is Truth.

When you study at that level, skin color is irrelevant. Nationality is irrelevant. Time frame is irrelevant.

I talked to a friend yesterday who is in Ghana. She was saying that one of the revealing things of her experience there is that, in spite of how different we are on the outside, on the inside we share a common human experience. Their concerns for their children are the same as ours.

Human nature is consistent across the span of ages and nationalities.

I don't study history because I necessarily need to know about them; I study it because I need to learn about me and how to conduct my life. I need to understand human nature. They teach me through their lives. History is nothing more than the stories of individuals living their lives. And every story can be traced to a condition of the heart--fear, jealousy, greed, anger, compassion, selfishness, faith, hope.

Look for the life lessons--which the older writers artfully wove into their history retellings--and you can avoid the tempests swirling around you. And a study of history will become meaningful and rich.



## MOI MINUTE

"One learns first of all in beach living the art of shedding; how little one can get along with, not how much... And what a relief it is! ...I am shedding pride...I shall ask into my shell only those friends with whom I can be completely honest. I find I am shedding hypocrisy in human relationships. What a rest that will be! The most exhausting thing in life, I have discovered, is being insincere. That is why so much of social life is exhausting; one is wearing a mask. I have shed my mask.

I find I live quite happily without those things..."

So many great thoughts within the pages of this little book! ([Gift from the Sea](#) by Anne Morrow Lindbergh)

I am transported to another place and time.

"There are two books from whence I collect my divinity; besides that written one of God, another of his servant, Nature - that universal and public manuscript that lies expanded unto the eyes of all: those that never saw Him in the one have discovered Him in the other." --Sir Thomas Browne