

# HEART MATTERS

NON SCHOLÆ SED VITÆ

*Libraries of Hope Newsletter*

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WISHING YOU ALL  
A MERRY CHRISTMAS  
AND A HAPPY  
HOLIDAY SEASON!

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

--Here we are, ready to begin Month 4 already! I know how busy the holidays are. So I went light on the American History topic—we take a look at the stories of just one man of virtue, George Washington. Several significant events involving Washington took place in December—the Christmas Night crossing of the Delaware and the subsequent victory at Trenton, arriving at Valley Forge 6 days before Christmas in the bitter winter, returning home Christmas Eve after resigning his commission. When George was only eight years old, his home on Ferry Farm, near Fredericksburg, burnt down on Christmas Eve. His family took shelter “in the detached kitchen and spent a cheerless Christmas Day.” And he breathed his last breath on December 14. Touching on a few stories each December is a great way to breathe life into this Father of our country.

I’ve tied his story into a study of Ancient Greece and Ancient Rome because Washington was seen as a modern day Cincinnatus, one of Plutarch’s lives. But it is a huge topic, so you might want to spend some of your summer time adding to your study. Some people switch out World History Month 6 and Month 4, so that they are studying the Holy Land during the Christmas season. That’s just fine. But keep in mind, understanding the Roman world to which Christ was born adds depth and meaning to His birth. Also, Italy is a part of Month 4, which is the home to many of the beautiful Madonna paintings, which is another possible tie-in to Christmas. You can go back and forth if you want.

Our nature topic is Plants/Trees. But again, because of the holiday season, I stretched it out over two months and called the next month Gardening. But it’s all studying the same thing. As I’ve mentioned, January may seem like the wrong month to study Gardening, but it actually is the best time to begin planting and preparing for the Spring just around the corner.

And finally, our Mother’s University topic is Art. It gets confusing because

(Announcements cont.) Music, Poetry, Storytelling—they are all Arts. But this month we are looking at Visual Arts. There's a December podcast where I highlight a book that talked about the various Madonna paintings. If you haven't yet watched and listened, maybe this is the time to do it.

Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and Happy Holiday Season!

--These books will be available in the store by the middle of the month.

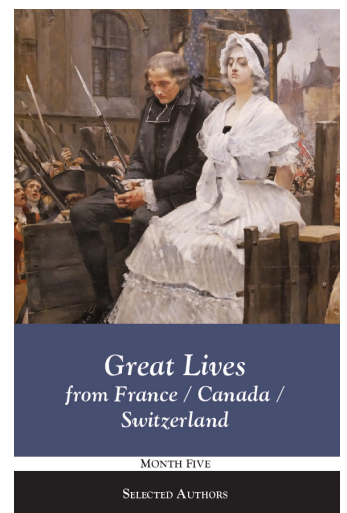
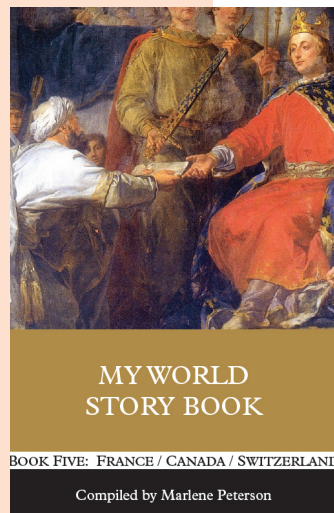
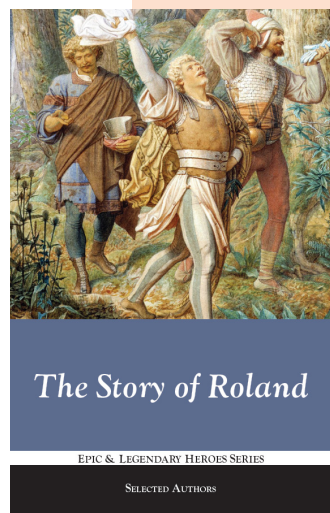
My World Story Book now takes a look at Great Lives from France.

Great Lives by Rotation includes stories of men and women from France and other countries related to France. You will find a number of stories that aren't found in the original Great Lives series, but that will be included in a Supplemental Volume we will make available at the end of the year.

Epic and Legendary Heroes: The Story of Roland and the age of Charlemagne.

Imaginative Tales: Tales from France as well as Canada.

--New Podcast: [Podcast #198--Believe Me](#). It's not very long. Come meet an Irish poet.



## WEH IN ACTION

--I love learning from home because sometimes the profoundest things come out of just simple conversations. And this one I felt I had to share. We were sitting around talking about various addictions and tendencies towards addictions etc. And I realized that addictions are the counter fit to true self care. And then as I was pondering on that statement it hit me that WEH is TRUE self care! Suddenly I could see how for centuries when someone had a bad day or was going through a trial or was overwhelmed they had been taught to turn towards nature, art, poetry, story and music! And then I realized we have some of the BEST literature, music, art etc. BECAUSE someone was going through a tough time and turned their pain into something beautiful through self care/creative expression! For many, many generations children observed or were taught to seek solace, peace, and meaning in difficulties through the 5 WEH principles. And the biggest aha for me today was that by doing my best each day to try to add in WEH to our life I am not just teaching homeschool, I am not just teaching about those 5 'subjects', no, it is SO much bigger than that because through WEH I am teaching my children self care skills that hopefully they will be able to carry with them into adulthood and beyond. It would make me so happy to know that in some future some-day, if my kiddos were struggling or their lives were really difficult for a time that they would turn to music, poetry, nature, art or story to help them cope. These are amazing coping skills to give our children! They are the original coping skills humans have had for millenia. And this thought gives me great comfort knowing that the world will likely become a more difficult place in the future but our children will be armed with the best and most lasting coping techniques! There is hope! And I now have added purpose and determination to fill our days with WEH principles and hopefully, for my children to see me turn towards these 5 beautiful things in my own life rather than to modern numbing activities that addict but bring no lasting peace. Here's to arming our children with beautiful

(WEH in Action cont.) and lasting true self-care skills!

--**Success story: my 18yo son** was homeschooled off & on. A few years ago was listening to some not great music. I was so worried but just taught him what our church leaders say about uplifting music once or twice then left it. I play classical music a lot whenever I can in the house. Today we watched a ballet performance of one of his friends & it was playing music from Romeo & Juliet a classic. He loved it & now has been playing classical music very loud in the basement as he studies. Moms, it's never too late. Just keep playing the music. Someday they will love it. It will become familiar.

--**I changed the screen saver** on our computer to photos of the countries we are studying that month. It has been delightful! There are some pretty incredible landscapes out there! It has also helped me better appreciate the stories and legends of each nation; one glance at the rocky crags of the Irish seaside could convince anyone there are selkies and sea monsters in the water and fairies hiding in the greenery!

--**Tonight we made stone soup** for dinner on our fire pit. My son loved helping to make it and enjoyed sitting by the warm fire.

Yesterday we went to rockhounding in a stream bed and found some chalk and jasper. Last week we found geodes. We enjoyed the beautiful lichen growing on the rocks. We found lava tubes that we could look into and land bridges that were formed from collapsed lava tubes.

Everytime we make the effort to go out and learn in nature, my heart is more at peace and I am comforted that I am doing enough for him to thrive and learn.

--**We are reading “The Story of Benjamin Franklin”** by James Baldwin and our reading today led us on a wonderful path of learning! In the chapter, it talked about how Benjamin Franklin invented the glass harmonica. My curiosity led us to look it up and watch it being played. We learned the inspiration for it came when Franklin heard wine glasses being played, and so we looked up a video of it being done. My son wanted to try it, and since we are house sitting for someone that has wine glasses, we were able to do it! We of course then had to look up some videos of the science behind how it works. Within just a short time we had mixed together history, music, and science!

--**I feel so blessed to have found an amazing group of women** to do a WEH-centered co-op with me! We keep tweaking it as we go and learning along the way. Today we sang Yankee Doodle, shared poetry and artwork, painted



“WHEN WE LONG FOR LIFE  
WITHOUT DIFFICULTIES,  
REMINDE US THAT OAKS  
GROW STRONG IN CONTRARY  
WINDS AND DIAMONDS ARE  
MADE UNDER PRESSURE.”

--Peter Marshall

Art credit: The Oak by Edvard Munch



Art credit: Welsh Landscape with Two Women Knitting by William Dyce

(*WEH in Action cont.*) landscapes from Wales, learned about early colonial history and sewed tea bags, read rock stories and learned about identifying them, learned what rocks and mineral have to do with pottery, read Beatrix Potter books and painted her style of illustrations, learned about Scotland and created tartans, and went nature journaling. I could never pull all that off on my own. What a blessing to join with other Mothers of influence!

--I took my girls on a field trip to the aquarium yesterday, and while we were there, I had a WEH epiphany that I'd like to share. We were in the jellyfish room and I was sitting back watching my girls enjoy it. We were in there for awhile and the room feels very Zen. It's dark, gentle music is playing in the background, and the jellyfish are in constant gentle motion. I sat watching them for awhile and I suddenly realized that I wasn't in a rush and I didn't particularly care about the information board next to the tank. My girls and I were simply soaking in the joy and wonder of one of

God's beautiful creations. The information board on the side was there for our pleasure if our observations led us to learn more, but it was ok and lovely to just sit and enjoy, experience, observe, and wonder on our own. We didn't NEED to know more. We'd experienced the loveliness that was enjoying a jellyfish, and that was enough. And in allowing us to slow down and enjoy the experience, I'll likely remember more about jellyfish from our own observation than anything I might remember from the fact board. I realized that I had just experienced organic, heart based learning, and we all loved it so much.

--I should put a warning on this post... WARNING that if you continue to use the WEH philosophy you will once again love teaching and learning and never look back...

It's strange how once you understand how the WEH philosophy works you no longer want to do other curriculum (or even use curriculum at all) the same way. I still have some but now I don't use it as intended. I immediately dissect it

and think "Ohh I can do this my way!" Once you feel the walls of the box are gone you don't want to be put back in that box again. I look over other curriculums or guides etc., but while they are lovely, I want to learn what we want to learn, not what someone tells me they think is important.

I have found that we are particularly fond of the Daulaire series and authors like Jim Murphy, Fritz, William Bennett, Mcauley, Alike, Maestro, Demi, Diane Stanley, Freedman. And we love the cornerstones of freedom books.

I used to be rigid about what we do each day but now we have a flow and a rhythm and it probably only makes sense to us. I still give ideas for notebooking but the children now take ownership over that and I am always amazed at what they choose. I don't stress over unfinished business because I just jot it down for next year's ideas. Maybe next year it won't matter or maybe it will, who knows.

I look more at what we have

(WEH in Action cont.) accomplished for the month rather than a checklist of what “needs” to be done. I am usually pretty surprised at what we have actually completed. Beowulf was a hit this month, we enjoyed the study of rocks, and for some reason they loved Ben Franklin and Samuel Adams, Dickenson and even Shakespeare. We read tales from Ireland and Scotland and England. They looked at castles, dragons, cathedrals, stained glass windows, coat of arms, rainbows, shamrocks, knights and learned more about Tolkien, Beatrix Potter and the true story about Winnie the Pooh. I would say month 3 was a success. Let’s go Month 4!!

Someone in the Homeschooling group was just helping someone new to WEH and said this:

“Don’t worry. It can feel overwhelming, but it’s like being trampled by rose petals. Once you find your feet again, it’s magical.”

That just made me smile, I hope you feel like you are being trampled by rose petals and not run over by a bull dozer!

Art credit: The Roses of Heliogabalus by Alma-Tadema



## MARLENE'S MUSINGS

--When I was recording today’s MWSB story of Eliphalet Remington, I said, wait just a minute, Eliphalet, what are you doing here?? You’re not from England! You are from New York!

I don’t know how he managed to sneak into a book about people from the British Isles, but he sure must have wanted to have a place there because he snuck past a whole bunch of us editing these stories!

So, Eliphalet, it looks like you came from good British stock, so we’ll let you stay. And the world could use more Eliphalets--if only we could pronounce your name. You gave and gave of your wealth until you had nothing left for yourself. You kept your honor and a clear conscience--an example of unwavering devotion and self-sacrifice.

So glad to have made your acquaintance. Please stick around. Even if you are from New York.

--My husband has recently started editing the audio stories for My World Story Book for me. After a few days, he said, “Wow. These stories just make you want to be better, don’t they?”

They do.

In Camelot, Arthur asks Merlin for the cure to sadness. The reply was: “Learn something new.”

I hope you are enjoying these stories from Arthur Mee -- they sure lift me up every single day--every day I learn something new.

--Arthur Mee: A Brave Heart That Should Keep on Ticking. Notice how his children’s encyclopedia was organized. This is the type of learning promoted through the rotation schedule and the Forgotten Classics:



(Marlene's Musings cont.) "The Encyclopedia encouraged them to explore everything, so they could restructure this mental schema as they learnt more the ideal Piagetian route for intellectual development.

"I learned to read in my first week at school because I was desperate to read the wonderful set our family had splashed out on. I am told that when I was six, schoolmates came around for me to read to them, with sometimes curious pronunciation, Fairy Stories of All Countries, and legends and true stories that set the imagination afire such as The Soul of Countess Cathleen, Sohrab and Rustum, the Boy who Would Not Lie, and Harriet Tubman, the Heroic Black Slave who led her People to Freedom.

"Memoirs attest how generations of children were enabled to be self-educators, able to give themselves a grounding in almost every area of human endeavour and knowledge, and discovering the springs for interests, ideals and careers."

Point of interest--his British Children's Encyclopedia was published in America as The Book of Knowledge.

--Is anyone spending time with King Arthur and his Knights in the Age of Chivalry in this month's tour of England?

"Chivalry! – why, maiden, she is the nurse of pure and high affection – the stay of the oppressed, the redresser of grievances, the curb of the power of the tyrant – Nobility were but an empty name without her, and liberty finds the best protection in her lance and her sword." --Sir Walter Scott in Ivanhoe

(Art credit: Stitching the Standard by Edmund Leighton)

## WEH GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS

--I'm a huge fan of [The Familyman's Christmas Treasury](#). There are eight 20-30 minute stories that my boys (13, and 11) love. It is free on Audible right now and some have found it on hoopla through their library!

"As a father. I wanted to read Christmas stories to my children that weren't too short, didn't confuse the truth with a tale, and pointed my children to the Savior. These wonderful stories will give your children hours of listening enjoyment as well as reinforce the true meaning of Christmas."

--Cellists Project ([YouTube](#)): Music has the power to bring people together of all cultures, ages, gender and nationalities. In a world becoming increasingly divided, that is pretty amazing. My sister-in-law participated in this cello project that brought together 457 cellists from 38 different countries for this performance--none of them having to leave home.

What a miraculous age we live in.

--Advertisement for the new [Imaginative](#) and [Heroes](#) Series, which my family is loving by the way.

I listened to this podcast this morning that someone had shared in this group. It basically talks about before introducing young kids to the problems and troubles of our culture and having them make judgment calls about individuals they meet in history, first introduce them to heroes. I think this quote from Charlotte Mason, who was quoting Mr. Fisher, who was quoting John Stuart Mill does a great job of summing it up (it is found in the sixth volume of CM's books):

(continued on next page)



Art credit: River Landscape by Jan van Goyen

(WEH Group Recommendations cont.) “Of course there is a great deal to criticize in any country, and I should be the last person to suggest that the critical faculty should not be exercised and trained at school. But before we teach children to criticize the institutions of their country, before we teach them to be critical of what is bad, let us teach them to recognize and admire what is good. After all, life is very short; we all of us have only one life to live, and during that life let us get into ourselves as much love, as much admiration, as much elevating pleasure as we can, and if we view education merely as discipline in critical bitterness, then we shall lose all the sweets of life and we shall make ourselves unnecessarily miserable. There is quite enough sorrow and hardship in this world as it is without introducing it prematurely to young people.”

--For those reading the rocks book from the LOH books, pg. 56 talks about cloudbursts and it was cool to find these videos to show it and then to listen to the music to experience it through listening.

[https://youtu.be/eFrueoB-\\_Zs](https://youtu.be/eFrueoB-_Zs)

[https://youtu.be/iCaX-t\\_P5q0](https://youtu.be/iCaX-t_P5q0)

--I found this fun song about rocks. Beware! It's a catchy little tune that stays in your mind for awhile. We played it in our co-op today and many of us were singing it all morning! <https://youtu.be/Cx4yCbJyIVQ>

--[How Green Was My Valley](#). This movie is on the Enrichment Section for this month for the country of Wales. I saw it years ago, and watched it today. It is such a beautiful movie. If you get a chance to read the comments please look for the one from Sarah B. It is the first one under the movie.

## MOI MINUTE

*The grace of home is that it is a place where we are deeply nourished and then given the capacity to be givers in our turn. That double rhythm of receiving, then giving...creates the heartbeat by which we live lives in God's goodness -- not just for ourselves, but for the world.*

November Chapter: Blessed & Blessing

The Life-Giving Home: Creating a Place of Belonging and Becoming by Sally and Sarah Clarkson

Art credit: Grandfather's Birthday by Ferdinand Georg Waldmüller

