

# HEART MATTERS

NON SCHOLÆ SED VITÆ

*Libraries of Hope Newsletter*

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“EVERY DAY IS A  
FRESH BEGINNING...  
TAKE HEART WITH THE  
DAY, AND BEGIN AGAIN.”

--SUSAN COOLIDGE

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

--HAPPY NEW YEAR!! Are you ready to dive into Month 5?

We’ve been talking about the American Revolution for a few weeks now as we have studied the life of George Washington and some of the early freedom fighters for independence. Now we’ll stop and take a look at the War itself and its key players. If you haven’t yet read or listened to *The Story of Lafayette* from the Freedom Series, I encourage you to do so. It has been a favorite in this group for years.

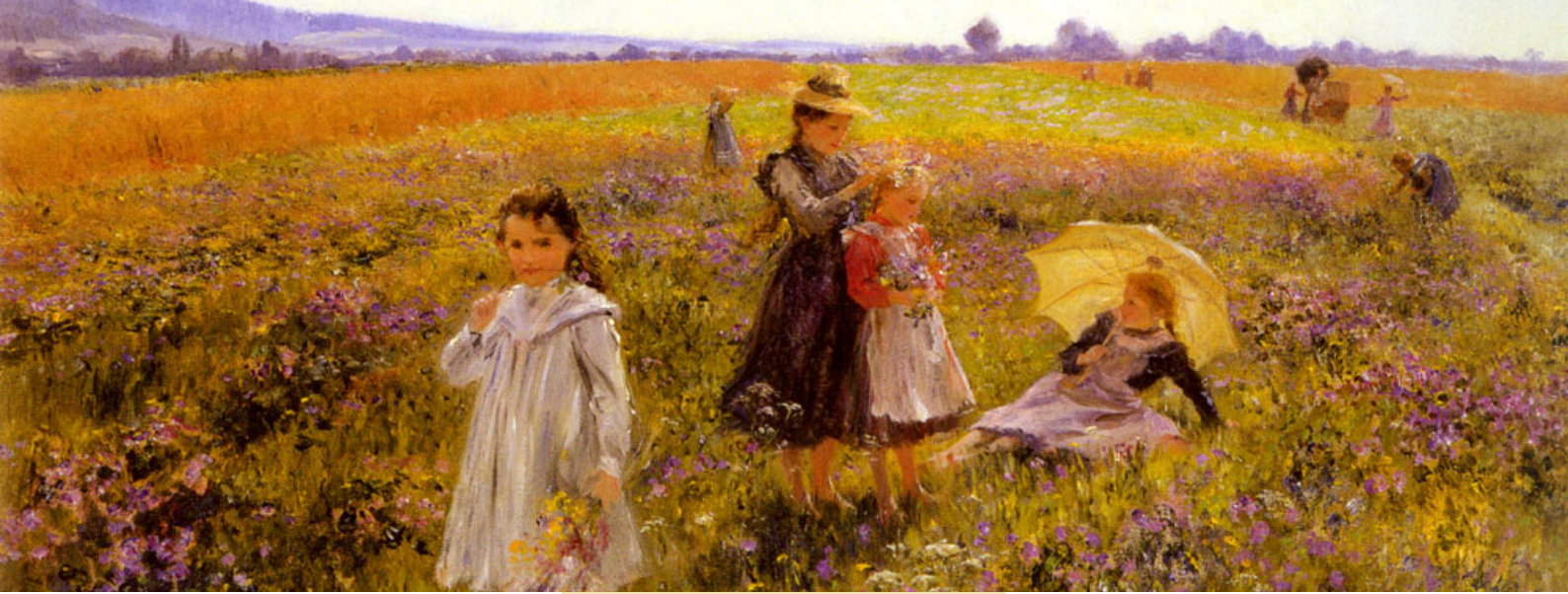
And it provides our tie into France, because Lafayette came from France to fight for our liberty and then went back home to try and help his own people secure liberty for themselves. You will see, though, it had an entirely different outcome. Why was that? Well, you will begin to understand it isn’t just the Constitution that makes us free. It has much more to do with the kind of people we are.

France also connects us to the story of Canada as the French were the first Europeans to occupy that territory until they lost it to the British. And I also tied Switzerland into the story of France because of part of her history, but it could have linked to other countries as well.

Our nature topic is Gardening, although it really is just a continuation of last month’s look at Plants and Trees. December was a busy month with Christmas, so I just spread it over two months. Plus, January is a perfect time to begin to plan for the garden you might want to plant in the Spring. Time to order those seed catalogues.

The Mother’s University Topic is Poetry. There are some great reads in the Mother’s Learning Library volume to help you fall in love with Poetry.

Happy explorations!



Art credit: Sommertag by Emil Czech

(Announcements cont.) --Dr. Gordon Neufeld presentation has now been reposted!

--Like I have mentioned, from time to time I come across books with great stories that aren't in Internet Archive and aren't available for sale anywhere. It's not practical to republish them, so I have been recording them and posting them in [mybelmonde.com](http://mybelmonde.com).

I started recording the stories from a book called [How They Blazed the Way](#) by J. Walker McSpadden and the first three stories happen to be about Ancient Greece. Hippocrates is up, Aristotle should be posted later today and Archimedes will be following shortly.

It's an easy way to add a little Ancient Greece into your day during this busy holiday season.

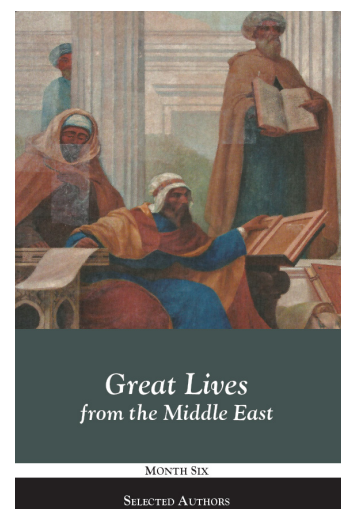
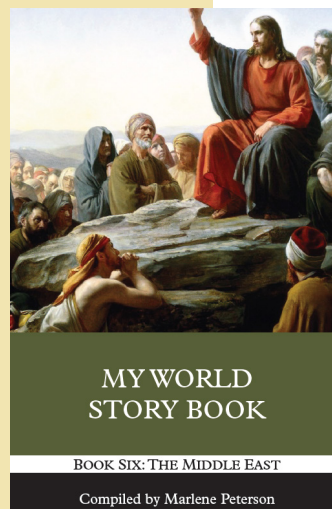
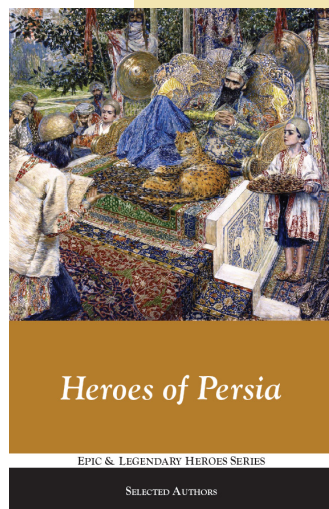
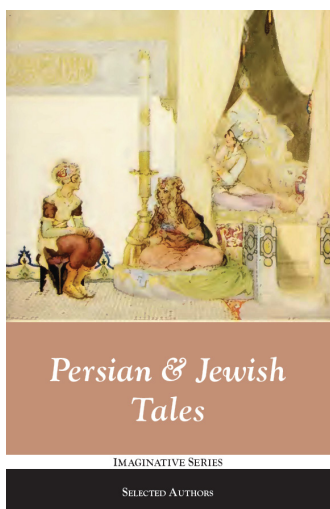
--New Month 6 Books will be in our store later this month!

Imaginative Series: Jewish and Persian Tales. These Persian Tales are over 2000 years old and teach 'the way of happiness.'

Epic Heroes: The story of Rostum and Sohrab, Persian heroes from the Shahnameh as told by Ferdowsi, who you will meet, by the way, in this month's My World Story Book.

My World Story Book includes stories of great men from the Bible as well as other Middle Eastern figures, even a modern day real life Indiana Jones.

Great Lives, Month 6: I am very excited to bring you stories of Jewish heroes, written by a Jew, from an out of print book that I haven't found a copy anywhere yet except for the copy I happened to pick up at a used book sale. You will also find chapters on the Parsi religion as well as Judaism, from the book Had You Been Born in Another Faith.



## WEH IN ACTION

### --The power of beautiful music...

At the beginning of a class I'm teaching, I asked the children if they enjoyed listening to classical music. Nearly everyone responded with a strong "no."

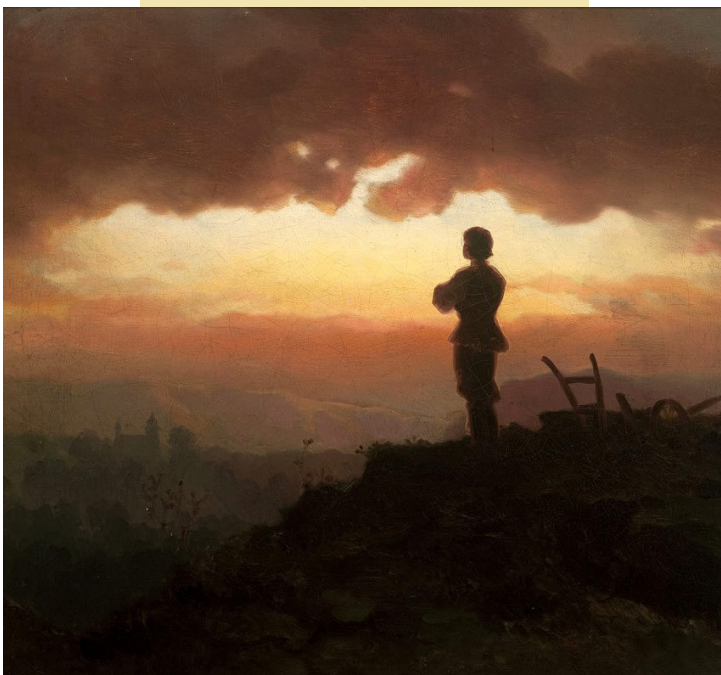
By the end of class, however, after learning about Beethoven and listening to some of his music, as well as part of the Peter and the Wolf Symphony, most of the kids became instant fans of classical music. They did not want me to turn the music off! The music had such an impact on a few kids that they continue to bring the subject up every week in class. It's been exciting for me to introduce more beauty into their lives.

There truly is something life-changing about beautiful music.

--I finished reading [Just David](#) this morning. I had a hard time getting into it because the beginning was sad. And being pregnant was not the best time to read it because I cried easier. But it is an amazing book! (Find it in the Sunshine series.) And now more than ever I want to embrace WEH. I know I need to implement slowly to avoid burnout. After reading it, I am even more grateful for this group and Marlene and co's work. I am grateful that when I sit at my table for breakfast and dinner that I can enjoy the sunrise and sunset and feel a little like David.

--My heart is filled with gratitude this morning. I am grateful for the journey that Well-Educated Heart has taken me on. As my two youngest are giggling and playing together, I am grateful to have them home to strengthen those bonds of family. I am grateful for the ability to appreciate and find true joy in nature. I am grateful for the curiosity and questions that come from reading, feeling, exploring, and seeing. I am grateful for stories and their parallels with the gospel story. We read Pandora this morning from the Greek imaginative tales and found the parallels of Adam and Eve and the story of Christ coming after all evil was loosed and the hope to be sent to earth. Was it coincidence that this morning's scripture study was about Christ as the light and hope of the world? Stories are powerful. And even though my kids are young now, I do believe that they will draw on those stories as they get older. I notice more and more how I may not entirely grasp a message or meaning in the original reading of the story but later something will make a connection with it and the lesson sinks in deeper. I am blown away at my 8 year old that I will start reading a story and he will remember that one or one that it reminds him of a story that I had told a few years before. Keep reading to your kids! The stories you tell them do matter!

--I think it important to ask yourself and your kids what is not working or is working well in your homeschool a couple times each school year. I find myself reevaluating our homeschool this time of year, every year.



**"IF I BUT OPEN EYES TO WONDER,  
SOW IN TENDER HEARTS DELIGHT  
IN ALL THAT'S GOOD AND TRUE AND LOVELY,  
THEY'LL LOOK UP AND SEEK THE LIGHT."**

Art credit: Evening Prayer of a Farmer by Artur Grottger



(*WEH in Action cont.*) Most of the time I know what is not working and what should be changed before I ask my kids. Of course this year it was something that was a fight the whole time we did it, which means we didn't always get to that because I wanted peace more.

So what do I do with this information? Well, I usually look for another option or go back to something that previously worked better. Like this year, we will be changing it up when we start school again after the New Year. Sometimes though it is important enough that we just need to figure out a way to continue on but make it more fun.

I encourage you all to ask yourself and your kids, if anything needs to change to give your home and homeschool more peace and happiness in learning. Because that is what is most important!!

--I've been thinking about a comment on here about in the Christmas Carol thread. After saying I didn't know the story of the Christmas Carol until I was an adult, my mom responded she had failed me as a parent. Someone else com-

mented that if she failed how does anyone else have any hope?

Something I love about WEH is there is always hope. My mom didn't start LOH/WEH or even start finding these resources until we were all out of the house. None of us were really raised this way. But guess what? Twenty years later she's still raising us, still influencing us. I grew up disliking poetry (thanks public school), was bored at art museums (zoomed through the Hermitage in Russia in about an hour), rolled my eyes at mom's classical music always playing in the background, read Babysitters Club and Lurlene McDaniel--none of the classics like Anne of Green Gables or Jane Austen. I always went to public school and a big University, but it wasn't until she guided me to a very small liberal arts school that I learned what education really felt like. Now, I'm in love with those things I used to dislike and I homeschool in the attempt to have my kids learn all the things I missed out on because I went to school. The other day I had a chat with a friend's 18yo son. We were talking about playing instruments and he wishes he had

started playing the guitar when he was younger because now it was too late to start learning. I told him it's never too late. My brother didn't start playing guitar until he was about his age and my mom just started learning how to play the harp and she's much older than 18. He nodded and said, "Yeah, I guess you're right. I never really thought about it that way."

I realized our society sets 18yos as an artificial end date. Have to get everything before that point because then they are adults on their own and have to start to live real life. No. That's so not true. There is so much life after 18. Over and over my mom says if your kids are fighting back on WEH or not ready for it then do it for you. Feed your own heart. If your relationship with your kids is what's important to you, you'll be influencing them and they'll influence you for the rest of your lives. It's really all about relationships. Using the resources from LOH can help build that bond.

There's always hope and it's never too late!

Art credit: Glückliche Kinder by Paul Barthel

## WEH GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS

--Cool music instruments from around the world: <https://youtu.be/qbkNNTkmJQ4>

--[What Children Lose When Their Brains Develop Too Fast](#): “The most important part of caring for young children is in some ways the easiest. Loving your children and giving them space to learn and explore is more important than crafting a particular curriculum. A longer, slower childhood may be better, at least if you believe that the adult environment will also be rich and varied.”

--I realized something while watching [It's a Wonderful Life](#) recently. It was something I missed the first 326 times I watched it. That is, I think the hero of the story isn't George, it's Mary. The movie starts off with Mary praying for God to be with George. Her prayer (and others) is the catalyst for the angel, Clarence, being sent to George. Mary is the one who sees the beauty of the old broken down house. “It's full of romance, that old place.” George sees empty space; Mary sees a space that can be filled with a family's love. That's why George kisses the broken banister knob in the end; he finally sees what Mary always saw in that house. Mary saw it on the day of their wedding. She was the one who transformed the house into “honeymoon suite.” Of course, that happened after she had the idea to offer her \$2000 honeymoon money to the people of the town during the bank run. When George is depressed by his friends moving onward and upward in the world and think he's a disappointment to his wife because of it, Mary makes it clear that she “didn't want to marry anybody else in town.” Never complaining, she worked “day after day remaking the old Granville house into a home.” This while having 4 children and running the USO. Finally, Mary is the one who goes all over town to ask for help for her husband. Uncle Billy remarks, “Mary did it, George! Mary did it!” I had never noticed her expression before when Uncle Billy says this. She's in the background as he says it, and she mouths “No...” while she shakes her head and moves further into the background. It's an incredibly subtle but important feature of her character: do good for others, but let others receive the credit. She moves fully into the background so that everyone giving money to George can come front and center. This was all orchestrated by Mary but she fades into the background. Now look at the picture below where Mary is again in the background. Note where she's positioned: over George's shoulder. The one watching over George all these years was Mary. She was as much a guardian angel to George as Clarence was.

In the end, George was a good man; even a great one. He was after all, “The richest man in town.” But would he have accomplished all he did, and been the man he was without Mary? I think the answer is definitely not. And there are many such Marys in this world who quietly go about, offering their prayers, works, and sufferings; raising their children; praying for their husbands and making them 10x the men they would have been without them. I know. I'm married to one. Most of their deeds won't be known this side of heaven. Until they're known, we, the Georges of this world, offer to you Marys our profound thank you. And we promise to keep trying to lasso the moon for you. You deserve nothing less.

--[Video](#) showing how to use WEH Books in the Apple Books app.

“[Maternal Sensitivity is] the strongest most consistent predictor of a child's cognitive social and emotional development. John, you know how much fathers mean, but literally from the birth of that infant and even in utero, we can now watch. Neuro-biological data allows us to watch the brain growth of that infant. Now, researchers will say that growth happens from within a relationship. It can only happen from within a relationship and it's a mother's body, mind and heart, literally growing the body, mind and heart of that infant.

You can watch how her right brain, which is the emotion side of the brain, the moral side of the brain, the relational side of the brain is doubling in size in that first year and it's literally her right brain to that infant's right brain is having this incredible communication process. ...

It is so amazing. It's not the language side of the brain. It's not flashcards and teaching them words and all of that. It's literally from heart to heart, this language of love these authors out of Berkeley will say. Through the language of love, the two of them have a common language years before speech where that brain is literally growing.”

--Dr. Jenet Erickson



Art credit: Heimkehr by Paul Barthel

## MARLENE'S MUSINGS

--I just had an ah-hah moment. I have often reflected on the fifth commandment: Thou shalt Honor thy father and mother, that thy days may be long upon the earth.

How does honoring your father and mother prolong your days? What if you had a horrible, abusive mother or father. Are you excused from the commandment?

And then it hit me.

I've been reading a book I'll tell you about in a bit that includes interviews with survivors of totalitarian governments i.e., Communism in Eastern Europe. They all said strong families and family relationships were how you survived and ultimately how Communist rule was overthrown. That was why it was necessary to break apart the family or minimize the family in order to take control.

Is this commandment pointed to us, not only individually but as a society--a free people--on how to long remain free upon the earth? He was addressing it, after all, to a people who had recently been freed from slavery and were entering a promised land of freedom.

Look up the word 'honor' in the 1828 dictionary. It has to do with holding up with great esteem or with great importance. Esteem means: High value or estimation; great regard; favorable opinion, founded on supposed worth.

Think of how the worth of parents, particularly the role of mothers, has been minimized or even mocked in our culture. A woman is said to have more worth outside the home than inside; that stay-at-home mothers are an economic drain on society. I say particularly mothers, but it is also the father. We went from Father Knows Best to Who Needs a Father. And what value is placed on the wisdom of our Elders--our Grandparents?

A primary message here at WEH is Mothers Matter! And fathers matter! Families matter!

We must honor (value, esteem, prize, reverence) them as a society.

Or, I'm afraid, our days as a free people are numbered.

--If you offer yourself the gift of time this holiday season, and want to re-charge yourself for the coming year, do yourself a favor and curl up with this book: [If You Want to Write](#) by Brenda Ueland. It was originally published in 1938--there are copies on Internet Archive.

(Marlene's Musings cont.) It's not just about writing. It's about everything I am trying to teach you through WEH. It is the Pattern for Learning. It is about love and life and abundance.

Let me share the last couple of paragraphs:

"Why should we all use our creative power and write or paint or play music, or whatever it tells us to do?

"Because there is nothing that makes people so generous, joyful, lively, bold and compassionate, so indifferent to fighting and the accumulation of objects and money. Because the best way to know the Truth or Beauty is to try to express it. And what is the purpose of existence Here or Yonder but to discover truth and beauty and express it, i.e. share it with others?

"And so I really believe this book will hasten the Millennium by two or three hundred years. And if it has given you the impulse to write one small story, I am pleased."



"This second period, from about three years to seven, is the Dramatic Age. ...a child of three or four turns to things of the spirit. What magnificent wisdom he shows! If our generation would but take the path of this imaginative age, civilization would lose its dullness. Eyes have we, but we see not; ears have we, but we hear not the sounds of the spirit. The more worldly-wise we become the less we use our eyes, our ears, our feet.

"The wisdom of children is that, as soon as they acquire the tools of language and skill in handling their bodies and the surrounding world, they turn to create art and speak poetic prose...

She then goes on to tell of a little blind boy of five who sang through a long, smoky tunnel while on a train while the rest of the passengers were irritable and annoyed. He changed the mood of the rest of the passengers. "He was in a magic dungeon, and, like Saint Peter and Saint Paul in prison, found his way out through angelic messengers and song. Children escape from all prisons, are free from all poverty, because wherever they are confined, they create."

--From a book, *Seven Ages of Childhood* by Ella Lyman Cabot

Art credit: *Happy Families* by Andre Henri-Dargelas



I could share gems from the book I just recommended all day. But here's one pertinent to our current Covid world:

“...I hope to prove to you the importance of working ...at some creative thing that you care about. ...”

“We have come to think that duty should come first. I disagree. Duty should be the by-product. ...The creative effort, the use of the imagination, should come first--at least for some part of every day of your life. It is a wonderful blessing if you will use it. You will become happier, more enlightened, alive, impassioned, light-hearted, and generous to everyone else. Even your health will improve. Colds will disappear and all the other ailments of discouragement and boredom.”

--Brenda Ueland 'If You Want to Write'

Art credit: Mutteremben by Miklos Barabas

## MOI MINUTE

This article is one of the getting started suggestions on the Mothers of Influence website. You might love sharing it and your thoughts with a friend some-time soon. <https://www.mothersofinfluence.org/moi-groups>

*“You and I are not the problem at all. WE ARE DOING PLENTY. We may feel inadequate, but that’s because we’re on the front lines of the problem, which means we’re the ones being hardest hit. We absorb the impact of a broken, still-oppressive social structure so that our children won’t have to. That makes us heroes, not failures.”*



Art credit: The Holy Family with a Curtain (cropped) by Rembrandt