

## THE FORTNIGHTLY'S BOOK OF SIGNIFICANCE

The first book of significance chosen is *Julia Newberry's Diary, with an Introduction by Margaret Ayer Barnes and Janet Ayer Fairbank*. W. W. Norton & Co., Inc. New York. 1933. Accompanying it is *Julia Newberry's Sketch Book: The Life of Two Future Old Maids* by Tracy D Mygatt. W. W. Norton & Co., Inc. New York. 1934.

The treasured diary of Julia Rosa Newberry captures in spirited notation the cultured city life, travels, struggles with health issues, and dreams of a young Chicago girl. Julia (28 Dec 1853 – 4 Apr 1876) died in Rome, Italy at age 22. She was the daughter of Walter Loomis and Julia Butler Newberry. The Newberry Library was founded in 1887 by a bequest of her father. The Fortnightly's papers are archived at the Newberry.

Although many personal letters, diaries, and journals were lost in the Chicago fire of 1871, Julia's diary (1869 to 1871) survived and provides a tender glimpse into her short life.

The diary was found in an attic in 1930 and published in 1933. Fortnightly members Margaret Ayer Barnes and Janet Ayer Fairbank wrote in its Introduction, "She lives for us again in its unpretentious pages. Her period lives with her, but there is nothing dated, nothing preciously quaint, about her reactions to life. For the discerning reader, there is in her work a possible indication that with Julia Newberry a mute, inglorious Jane Austen died."

The Newberry Library has a photocopy of the handwritten diary online.

<https://collections.newberry.org/asset-management/2KXJ8ZSLON5H2?&WS=SearchResults&Flat=FP>

You can view the diary and the scanned original scripted pages while also reading the transcribed text as she had written it.

Copies of both books will be on display from Thursday, Sept 18 to Thursday, November 20, 2025, in the Board Room and Lathrop Room Libraries.

Both books are member-donated books in the permanent Fortnightly Library Collection.

