I remember little Sofya in 1858,
by Joseph Malevich, 1890

At my first meeting with my gifted pupil in October 1858 I saw an eight-year-old girl rather strongly built, of a pleasant and attractive appearance, whose brown eyes shone with a receptive intelligence and a heartfelt kindness. [...] Three or four years of entirely successful lessons passed without the occurrence of anything notable. But when our study of geometry reached the ratio of the circumference of a circle to its diameter [...] my pupil, when explaining this topic in the next lesson, astonished me by arriving at the same result in a completely different way using her own reasoning. (1)

I have never understood which result is referred to in this narrative, which seems to deal with the definition of \( \pi \) rather than with a “result”.

I remember the little sparrow before our marriage,
by Vladimir Onufrievich Kowalevski, 1868

Though she is only eighteen, the little sparrow is well educated, knows languages as well as her native tongue and, she is at present learning mathematics, and poring over spherical trigonometry and integrals, she is as busy as an ant, from morning till night, but she is also lively, sweet and has very good looks. On the whole, this is a happiness that has come like a bolt from the blue. (2)

1. Quoted in [Cooke 2002a].
2. Letter to his brother Alexander, quoted in [Kochina 1985, p.44].
What with all my experience, book-reading and push, I cannot grasp and comprehend political and economic problems half as rapidly as she does, and rest assured, she is not just carried away, this is a sober analysis. [...] I think she will make of me a decent person, that I shall drop my publishing business and start research, although I cannot conceal from myself that her nature is a thousand times better, more intelligent and talented than mine, to say nothing of her diligence: they say she works in her country house for twelve hours a day without a stop, and as far as I can see for myself here, she can work like I never would. [...] On the whole, she is a young phenomenon, and why I have got it I can’t imagine. (3)

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I remember my cousin in 1868, 
by Sofya Adelung, 1896

[She] was always ready to go through fire, to die like a martyr for her lofty ideals, for humanity. (4)

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I remember Königsberger’s Russian student, 
by Thomas Hirst, July 27th, 1869

27 July 1869, journal

After another bath in the Neckar I attended Königsberger’s lecture on Theory of Determinants. He introduced me to a young Russian lady [Sofya Kovalevskaya] ... who attends his lectures and is at home in Elliptic Functions. She belongs to the mathematically gifted family of Schuberts. She is pretty and exceedingly modest. (5)

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3. Idem, [Kochina 1985, p.49], I do not know if this is from the same letter.
4. Sofia Adelung was a cousin of Sofya, quoted in [Kochina 1985, p.35].
5. Quoted in [Gardner & Wilson 1993].