

PEOPLE OF THE PAST

When Napoleon Bonaparte was at Arcola he hesitated to storm the bridge in the face of a hot and steady fire from the Austrians on the opposite side of the river. A young bugler named Andre—a mere boy—leaped into the water, swam to the other bank, rushed into the enemy's ranks and began blowing his bugle. The Austrians were so astonished and excited that for a moment they believed themselves surrounded, and, taking instant advantage of their situation, Napoleon stormed the bridge and captured it. The intrepid bugler lived to be a veteran soldier, and although he never was rewarded in anyway during his lifetime long years afterward the people of Paris erected a monument to his memory.

John Abel, an English musician of the time of Charles II., gifted with a tenor voice of the most remarkable beauty and strength, was one of the chief singers of the choir of the royal chapel. In 1688 he was exiled from England on account of his religion. Wollkown Capelmeister asserts that Abel was in possession of a secret by which he was enabled to preserve in all their integrity, the fine qualities of his voice to an extreme old age. He was also a very skillful and graceful performer on the lute or guitar. Being of a wild and improvident disposition he was at length so reduced in circumstances as to be obliged to travel through several countries of the continent on foot with his guitar slung across his back. In his wanderings he arrived at Warsaw and was sent for by the King of Poland, who wished to hear him sing. Abel excused himself under pretence of a severe cold. On this answer being made known to his Majesty, a peremptory order was dispatched to the unwilling musician to repair instantly to the court. As soon as he appeared he was led into a vast hall,

round which ran a gallery, in which was the king and a numerous company of courtiers and ladies. Abel was placed in an arm chair, which by means of ropes and pulleys was drawn up several feet from the ground to the great astonishment of the singer; but this astonishment was quickly changed to terror when he saw a monstrous and savage bear let loose into the hall. The choice was then given him either to be let down upon the floor to try conclusions with the shaggy intruder or to gratify the king and the royal suite by the exertion of his vocal powers. Without hesitation he chose the latter alternative, and he was never known to sing with a stronger vibration of tone or a voice more perfectly clear and free from all symptoms of cold or hoarseness.

Bonnet, in his *Historic de la Musique*, gives the following extraordinary account of a mathematician, mechanician, and musician, named Alix, who lived at Aix, in Provence, about the middle of the seventeenth century. Alix, after many years' study and labour, succeeded in constructing an automaton figure, having the shape of a human skeleton, which, by means of a concealed mechanism, played, or had the appearance of playing, on the guitar. The artist, after having tuned in perfect unison two guitars, placed one of them in the hands of the skeleton, in the position proper for playing, and on a calm summer evening, having thrown open the window of his apartment, he fixed the skeleton with the guitar in its hands in a position where it could be seen from the street. He, then, taking the other instrument, seated himself in an obscure corner of the room, and commenced playing a piece of music, the passages of which were faithfully repeated or echoed by the guitar held by the skeleton, at the same