CONSERVING OUR HARVESTS

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Three and a half centuries ago Francis Bacon said "I take all knowledge to be my sphere." Though competent scholars state that Bacon was far from having full knowledge of the science of his day, his aspiration was not ridiculous or even particularly remarkable in his time, and had he given to science half the time he devoted to statecraft he might well have mastered all the science that was then known. An Italian contemporary of Bacon, Giambattista della Porta, made studies which are still mentioned in histories of optics, included in his extensive "Magia Naturalis," a chapter on producing new plants—probably the first organized article on plant breeding—wrote a work on plant signatures and in modern literary histories he is discussed as the leader of the notable group of writers of Italian comedies in a period when Italian comedy was the most notable literary movement in the world. A century later the best-known English writer on gardening, John Evelyn, by whom greenhouse heating was considerably advanced and gardening made respectable, was only a part-time horticulturist; he was also an authority on some of the fine arts and rather constantly engaged with public affairs. Most of the German pomologists of the early nineteenth century made their extensive varietal studies and wrote their monumental works in time spared from their labors as pastors or teachers. When our own agricultural colleges and experiment stations were organized, nearly two centuries after Evelyn, full-time horticulturists were rare in