

the pericarp seems much like that of the common thistle. The root-leaves, which still possess their verdure, and are about half-grown, are of a pale green color. The root, however, is the only part used. It is from 9 to 15 inches long, about the size of a man's thumb, perpendicular, fusiform, and with from two to four radicles. The rind is of a brown color and somewhat rough. When first taken from the earth it [the root] is white, and nearly as crisp as a carrot; in this state it is sometimes eaten without any preparation. But after it is prepared by the same process used for the *pasheco-quamash*, which is the most usual and the best method, it becomes black and much improved in flavor. Its taste is exactly (*p.* 149) that of sugar, and it is indeed the sweetest vegetable employed by the Indians. After being baked in the kiln it is eaten either simply or with train-oil; sometimes it is pounded fine and mixed with cold water, until it is reduced to the consistence of sagamity, or Indian mush, which last method is the most agreeable to our palates.

2. Three species of ferns grow in this neighborhood, but the root of only one is eaten.⁴ This is very abundant in those parts of the open lands and prairies which have a deep, loose, rich, black loam, without any sand. There it attains the height of four or five feet, and is a beautiful plant with a fine green color in summer. The stem, which is smooth, cylindric, and slightly grooved on one side, rises erectly about half its height, when it divides into two branches, or rather long foot-stalks, which put forth in pairs from one side only, near the edges of the groove, declining backward from the grooved side. These foot-stalks are themselves grooved and cylindric; and, as they gradually taper toward the extremities, put forth others of smaller size, which are alternate, and have 40 or 50 alternate, pinnate, horizontal, sessile leaves; the leaves are multipartite for half the length of their foot-stalk, when they assume the tongue-like form altogether; being, moreover, revolute, with the upper disk

⁴ That species of fern whose root is eaten is *Pteris aquilina* var. *lanuginosa*, very much like the common brake of the United States.