

some, easy of digestion, and yields as good nourishment as any other sort. After the Indians have reduced it into meal by pounding it, they make cakes of it, and bake them before the fire. I have already mentioned that some nations eat it in cakes before it is ripe, in which state it is very agreeable to the palate, and extremely nutritive.

WILD RICE. This grain, which grows in the greatest plenty throughout the interior parts of North America, is the most valuable of all the spontaneous productions of that country. Exclusive of its utility as a supply of food for those of the human species, who inhabit this part of the continent, and obtained without any other trouble than that of gathering it in, the sweetness and nutritious quality of it attracts an infinite number of wild fowls of every kind, which flock from distant climes, to enjoy this rare repast; and by it become inexpressibly fat and delicious. In future periods it will be of great service to the infant colonies, as it will afford them a present support, until in the course of cultivation, other supplies may be produced; whereas in those realms which are not furnished with this bounteous gift of nature, even if the climate is temperate and the soil good, the first settlers are often exposed to great hardships from the want of an immediate resource for necessary food. This useful grain grows in the water where it is about two feet deep, and where it finds a rich, muddy soil. The stalks of it, and the branches or ears that bear the seed, resemble oats both in their appearance and manner of growing. The stalks are full of joints, and rise more than eight feet above the water. The natives gather the grain in the following manner: nearly about the time that it begins to turn from its milky state and to ripen, they run their canoes into the midst of it, and tying bunches of it together, just below the ears, with bark, leave it in this situation three or four weeks longer, till it is perfectly ripe. About the latter end of September they return to the river, when each family having its separate allotment, and being able to distinguish their own property by the manner of fastening the

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