

four feet deep. It often reaches a height of nine or ten feet and grows in a thick mass; the leaves are long, flat, and lanceolate; the panicle is pyramidal in form; the lower branches are spreading and staminate; the upper branches erect and pistillate. This unusual arrangement necessitates a reversal of the common method of fertilization. In wild rice the small grains of pollen are lighter than the surrounding atmosphere. So, on leaving the anther, instead of falling, as in most plants, they rise to come in contact with the stigmas and produce fertilization.³ This variety of grass is exceedingly prolific. While found in many of the lakes and streams of northern Wisconsin, it does not grow in all of those which seem fitted for it. It can be sown in proper places with good results. It is an annual, the plant from the seed dropped in the fall coming up through the water in early June and at once putting forth its flower-stalk. It flowers in July and early August and reaches maturity in September. The seed is longer than that of common rice and is of a dark slate color. This plant is the *folles avoines* of the early French writers. Its harvest marked an important time in the Indian's year and preceded the great annual autumnal hunt. With the ancient village sites and the best hunting grounds, the rice fields were esteemed the most valuable tribal property and were vigorously defended.⁴

At the present day wild rice is an important item in the diet of the Ojibwa Indians of Wisconsin. The fields on Kakagon river, several miles from their village, are annually visited for the harvest. In the Ojibwa tongue August is *Manominikegisiss*, the "rice-making moon." About the first of this month these Indians prepare large quantities of cedar-bark rope or twine, using the inner bark torn into long, narrow strips, which are then tied together. This twine is rolled into a large ball for convenience in handling. Toward the middle of August, when the rice is in the milk, they visit the rice fields in their canoes. Two women usually work together. One paddles or pushes the canoe; the other sits or kneels, with her roll of cedar twine behind her, the end passing forward through a ring on her shoulder. This woman gathers as many rice-stalks as she can conveniently reach and fastens them together in a sheaf by passing her twine

³ C. L. Flint. *Grasses and Forage Plants*, p. 89.

⁴ W. W. Warren. *History of the Ojibways*, p. 222.