

NOTES FROM THE RURAL GROUNDS

THE JAPAN CHESTNUT IN AMERICA.—

Although the Japan chestnut has scarcely been known in this country 30 years, almost as many named varieties have been produced as from our native and the long-cultivated European species together. Trees of the Japan chestnut were first offered by S. B. Parsons, Flushing, N. Y., in 1876. About that time J. M. Thorburn & Co., New York, received a quantity of nuts by mistake in an importation of lily bulbs from Japan. Japanese bulbs were then packed for shipment in tea chests, instead of the baskets now in use, and it was supposed that chests containing chestnuts for local use had been wrongly labeled with the bulb importer's name and address, and thus included in the shipment. The nuts came over in good condition, and were of the usual gigantic size and wretched quality associated with this species. There was no market for these stray nuts, and they were planted for trial by the senior partner of the seed house, F. W. Bruggerhof, at his home in Noroton, Conn. They grew well, the trees proved fairly hardy, bore early, and are now immense broad-headed specimens, probably the finest in this country. There was soon a call for the nuts for nursery use, and they have since been regularly imported. Thousands of seedlings have been grown from these foreign nuts, almost invariably of the big size and low quality type, and planted over the country. As seedlings bear in from two to five years great quantities of these low-grade nuts have found their way to the markets, disgusting buyers who expect something better, and to a considerable extent "queering" the whole trade in large or foreign chestnuts.