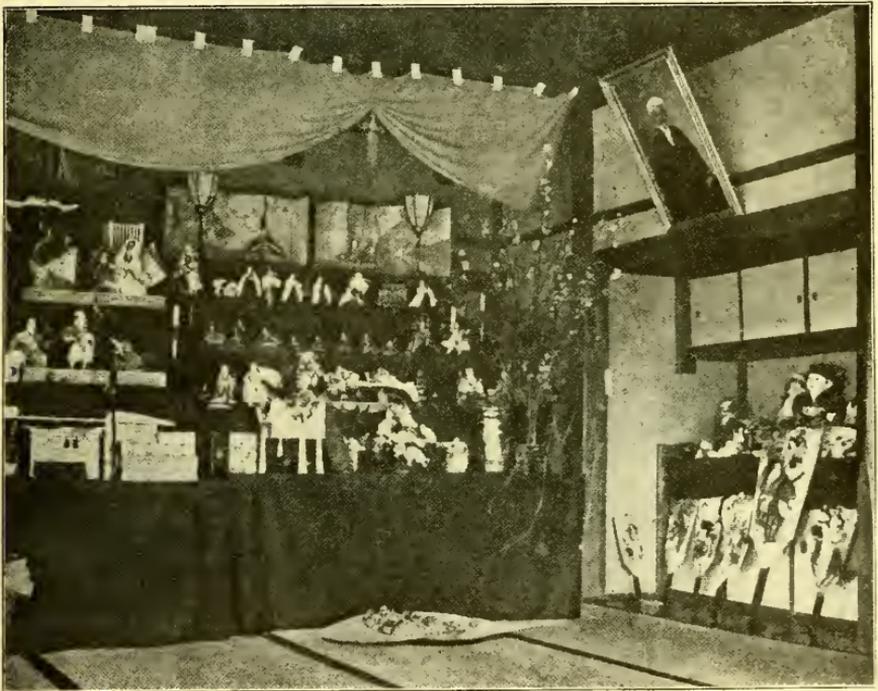


THE JAPANESE FLORAL CALENDAR.

III. THE PEACH. THE DOLLS' FESTIVAL.

BY ERNEST W. CLEMENT, M. A.

THIS blossom, coming between the plum, "of classical fame and predilection," and the cherry, "of patriotic boast," is

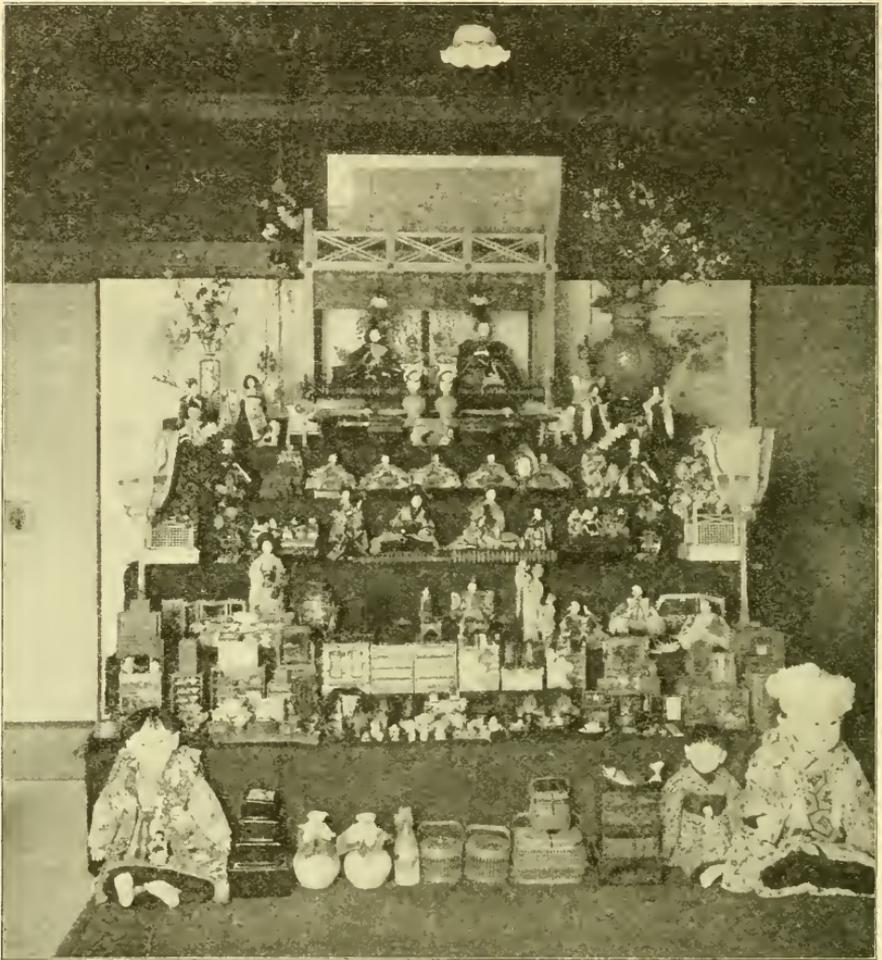


rather overshadowed by those popular favorites. And yet, as Mr. Conder adds,¹ the peach "excels in size, richness, and coloring. These blossoms are of numerous tints,—white, different shades of pink, and a deep crimson remarkably rich in tone. The peach-

¹*The Floral Art of Japan.*

blossom in mass, as it appears in groves and orchards, contributes far more to the beauty of the spring landscape than its more honored but severer brother, the plum-blossom." "The orchards of peach-trees in blossom are much frequented by the common people."

Of the different colors, the pale pink is said to rank first. The peach-blossom, the Japanese name of which is *momo*, meaning



"hundred," is considered "emblematic of longevity," and is a greater favorite in China than in Japan. It is generally associated with oxen, as in the following Chinese saying, depicting a peaceful scene of prosperous country life: "Turn the horse on the flower-covered mountain and the ox into the peach-orchard."

In the art of Japanese floral arrangement the peach and the

cherry-blossoms make an "objectionable combination." The peach-blossom is, however, most felicitous by itself, or with other blossoms, on the occasion of the Dolls' Festival, often called the "Peach Festival," on the third day of the third month. Indeed, the peach is especially connected with girls.

The peach is commonly supposed to have the mysterious power of driving away evil spirits, or keeping them at a distance. In China as well as in Japanese folklore arrows made of peach-tree wood are frequently used for the purpose of piercing the otherwise invulnerable hearts of devils.

Chinese doctors sometimes use the extract of the peach leaves or kernels for medicinal purposes.