

THE JAPANESE FLORAL CALENDAR.

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V. THE WISTARIA.

FOR this month we had a choice between the peony, the azalea and the wistaria, and selected the last on account of its uniqueness. It is generally "reared upon large trellises, arranged to cover

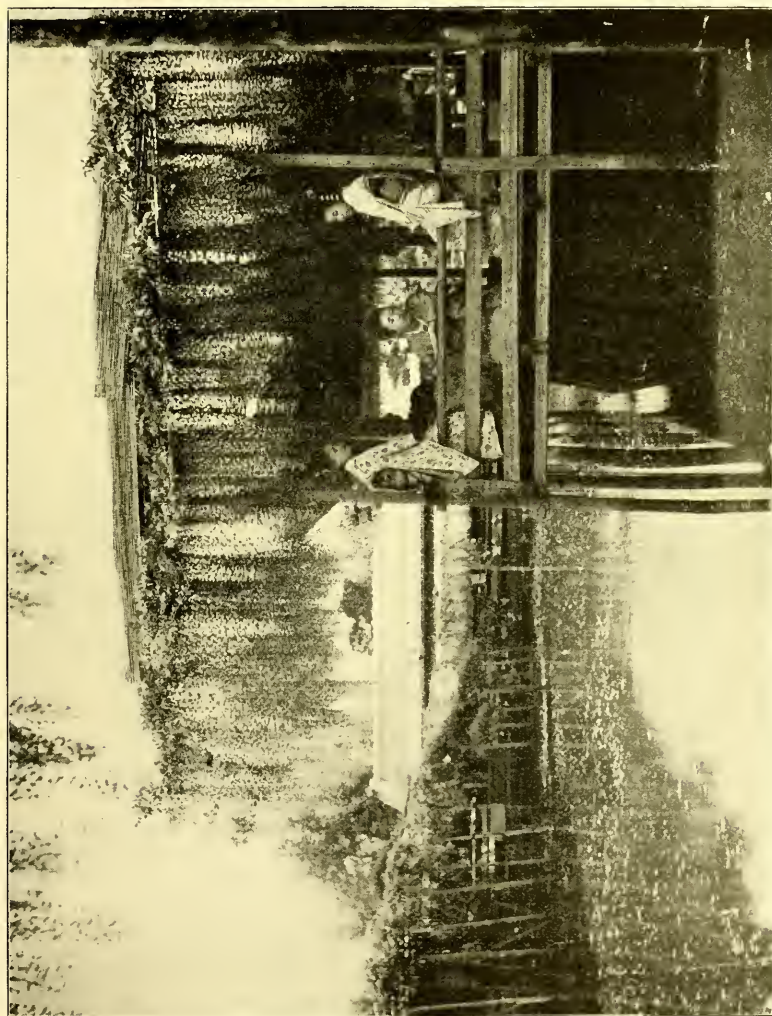


AZALEA BLOSSOMS.

long walks, bridges or arbors, in pleasure grounds and gardens." "The sprays of its flowers often exceed three feet in length, whilst a hundred persons may rest under its shadow, and its stem grows to the thickness of a man's body; its branches are used as cables."

The purple blossom is the commonest and also the most highly esteemed. This flower, like the cherry, is associated with the pheasant. It typifies youth.

“A belief exists that this flower attains great size and beauty



WISTARIA TEA HOUSE, KAMEIDO, TOKIO.

if its roots are nourished with *sake*; and there is, at Kameido, a tree producing specially fine blossoms, at the base of which visitors are accustomed to empty their cups.”

“At Kashukabe, north-east of Tokio, is the most famous wista-

ria in the empire. The vine is 500 years old, with pendent blossoms over 50 inches long, and trellises covering a space of 4,000 feet." "Though much honored and used for felicitous occasions, the *fuji* must not be employed at weddings on account of its purple color."

This blossom often gives its name to girls; one of the heroines of the *Genji Monogatari* is the Princess Wistaria. Concerning another heroine of that book, Prince Genji, the hero, sung as follows:

"When will be mine this lovely flower
Of tender grace and purple hue?
Like the wistaria of the bower,
Its charms are lovely to my view."

It has become famous in Japanese history through the Fujiwara family.

The following are other examples of wistaria* poems from Japanese literature:

"I come weary,
In search of an inn—
Ah! these wistaria flowers."

"O lovely wistaria, now in bloom,
Twine thy twigs, even though broken,
To those people who pass by thee,
Without stopping to admire thy beauty!

"Men dare not pass away without looking
At the wistaria, in a wave of beauty,
Though my small garden be humble,
With nothing attractive for the eye."

"In blossom the wistaria trees to-day
Break forth that sweep the wavelets of my lake:
When will the mountain cuckoo come and make
The garden vocal with his first sweet lay?"

And Piggott quotes a prose version of another poem, as follows:—

"What," says he, "though I be outside the ring-fence and can not sit beneath thy shade, thou sendest, gentle Wistaria, thy fragrance across it to me, treating me like a friend."

*Often misspelled "wisteria"; this is incorrect, because the flower was named for a Caspar Wistar.