

also find much enjoyment in walking on stilts through the snow.

Then spring! Scarcely are the New Year festivities over, when, through the snow that has fallen on the plum-tree branches, there begin to peep buds of pink and white, and in a week or two the numerous gardens, which everywhere pad the low roofs of the city, are bright and fragrant. In the suburbs are gardens specially devoted to the plum blossom, and thither the father betakes

The cloudless sky, the scented air, mild with just a whiff of the snowy mountains, the masses of bloom unbroken but by the thin lines of the boughs, the twittering birds rocked in the blue, the stillness only accentuated by the drone of a humming kite flown by the children—all combine to make a scene of elysian happiness and peace.

Soon thereafter the peach and the camellia have their gala, the peach beloved by the elves, "the camellia of eight thousand



MAKING TEA.

himself, accompanied by his wife and family, all dressed in their best. A blooming damsel effusively welcomes them, and conducts them to one of the many matted platforms which are scattered throughout the little plum grove. Squatted on this, they refresh themselves with tea and sweetmeats, and, inspired with the beauty of the rich pink clusters which overhang them, the elders write quaint couplets on slips of paper and affix them to the branches.

years." But queen of the spring blossoms is that of the cherry. An avenue of two miles on the further bank of the Sumida river near Tōkyō is devoted to this flower. To the flower, mark you, not the fruit, for to this romantic people beauty is more than utility. Nothing but cherry bloom on either side and overhead for two miles—it is one of the sights of the world. In the avenue it is difficult to make one's way, so dense is the throng. But at the side are