

KOUMIS.—In the *Pharmaceutical Journal and Transactions* is reproduced the letter of a *Daily News* correspondent, who, writing from Samara, gives a most interesting account of Koumis and its manner of preparation. The letter is too long for the space at our disposal, so we must be content with a summary of the main points of interest. Koumis, as our readers are doubtless aware, is a beverage which has for a long time been used by certain Tartar tribes. It has been reported as combining the nourishing properties of milk, with the invigorating qualities of alcohol, and it has been observed that consumption, and its cognate disorders, were unknown among the tribes who habitually drank Koumis. Starting from this observation, several Russian physicians—notably Dr. Portnikoff, of Samara,—conceived the idea that this barbaric compound might possess valuable medicinal properties, which might be turned to good account. Experiments were made on consumptive patients, and the result was highly satisfactory. So much so, that the doctor above named, decided upon establishing a hospital at Samara, where the afflicted might resort, and Koumis of the first water might be enjoyed to an unlimited extent. Samara is about three hundred miles nearer civilization than Orenburg, the chief centre of the Koumis country, and is therefore comparatively approachable. Dr. Portnikoff's hospital has grown into a small colony, and the success attending the experiment has induced other persons to engage in similar undertakings. A Koumis establishment is now to be found in the neighbourhood of Moscow; another near St. Petersburg; and a third at Wiesbaden. Koumis is prepared from the milk of Tartar mares, fermented by a peculiar process. In most cases the fermentation is set up by the addition of a portion of milk which has undergone this stage, but yeast is sometimes used. The mixture is allowed to stand for some time, and is then subjected to churning, but this operation is not continued until butter or curds are formed. A portion of the contents of the churn is drawn off and constitutes a weak variety of Koumis. The balance is subjected to further fermentation and churning, and the result is a liquor containing much carbonic acid gas, and some alcohol. The Koumis is secured in strong quart bottles, tied over after the manner of champagne. Of this liquid some patients consume six or eight bottles a day, while others subsist entirely on it. In the early stages of consumption a beneficial change often results: in the advanced stage little benefit is derived. Lingering cases of recovery from wasting illness appear to be most benefitted. About one point there appears to be considerable uncertainty; that is as to what constitutes the peculiar virtues of Koumis. Some affirm that *Tartar* mares are an essential; some insist on the peculiar pasturage—covel, *Stipa pennata*—upon which the animals feed; while others say that the method of preparation is the main part. Of the latter class is Dr. Yagielski, an authority on Koumis, who not only goes so far as to deny the indis-