

from all monastic restraint ; and nuns are allowed to reside in hermitages, sometimes in the proximity of a male hermit. The result has been sufficiently indicated above.

Question 168. In what relation does the Brotherhood stand to the laity ?

Answer. Their mutual relation is a purely moral one, free from all outward obligation. . . . The brethren are to be to the laity a living example of self-control, self-denial, and charity. When desired to do so, they are to explain and expound the doctrine to the laity, and be ready at all times to give them spiritual advice and assistance.

As a matter of fact, the Buddhist clergy is an example of purest self-indulgence and selfishness. A lama never does anything except for payment. Is he required to perform any ceremony, food and money must be provided. Is he to exorcise demons, "cash down" is the rule. Is he to read the doctrine, he has a regular tariff of charges ready. A lama never carries a load ; not even the holy books or gifts for his monastery will he himself bear away. A brisk trade is carried on in charms and amulets. A bit of clean rag—value less than one-tenth cent—is tied into a knot, the lama mumbles over it, spits on it, ties it to the man's cap, and : "50 cents, please !" In this way a lama of reputation can on a good day earn several dollars an hour. As for expounding the doctrine, they are absolutely unable to do so. Stupidity is written on the faces of most of them, and they understand the dialect of the books very little better than many of the laity. One asks in vain for any explanation of a difficult word, while definitions of religious or philosophic terms are quite beyond their powers. At the same time, they never confess their ignorance, but seek to hide it by voluble disquisitions on all manner of things except that under discussion. Sometimes you may succeed in getting a lama narrowed down to the real question at issue, only to see him escape with the bland remark : "Oh, that's a mystical term. Only the Dalai Lama knows what that means." They mumble and gabble the books rapidly enough, but as far as understanding is concerned, it might as well be Choctaw. There must undoubtedly be a sprinkling of really learned lamas in Tibet, and occasionally a clever man appears even in Ladak ; but the average lama is as ignorant as the ordinary layman. Many Ladaki lamas, after "completing their education" in the great monasteries of Tibet, return more conceited but as densely ignorant as before. I once asked a lama about the Pratimoksha Sutra, which contains the chief rules of discipline for monks, and should be solemnly recited twice a month. He not only did not know the contents, but denied that such a book existed, and was only convinced when I pointed it out to him in the library of his monastery. And yet he had just returned from twelve years' study in Lhasa, and had no doubt rattled it off scores of times. If a lama can read, write, and recite certain passages from memory, his education is completed. It is hard to see how such people can "give spiritual advice and assistance."