

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

The Editor,
Alpine Journal.

DEAR SIR,—Dr. Finzi, in the course of his review of my book on the Dolomites, says that 'the practice of sending round one's nailed boots by a porter to the summit by an easy route is not mentioned, the reviewer wonders if this, which was general before the late war, has been abandoned and whether as a result of vibrams or lack of cash.'

The practice is mentioned (on p. 88) but as the question has been raised I should say that it has not been abandoned. It is still necessary on such climbs as the Marmolata South Wall, the Einser North Wall, the Langkofel Nordkante, and similar big walls in the Grade IV or V class and of lengths up to 3,000 ft. It has probably declined for many shorter climbs when Vibrams can be worn all the way.

Ninety per cent. of Dolomite climbers use Vibram, which is less open to objection here than in the Western Alps where the glacier work is so much greater. But the harder Dolomite routes still demand either rubbers or kletterschuhe. The former are the better in dry, settled weather. In doubtful conditions the poorer grip of felt soles on dry rock is outweighed by their excellence on wet rock, and for a long climb I would prefer them.

The expense of a porter is about 30s. to £2, which is not high, especially when divisible between two climbers.

Yours faithfully,
C. DOUGLAS MILNER.