

Don't build picturesquely. Leave such effects to the cliffs, the mountains and the sun. A person who dresses picturesquely is not picturesque but a buffoon. A farmer doesn't dress picturesquely. But he is.

Build as well as you can. Not better. Don't strain yourself. And not worse. Don't deliberately bring yourself down to a lower level than the one on which your birth and upbringing have placed you. Even if you are going into the mountains. Talk to the farmers in your language. The Viennese lawyer who talks to farmers in a hayseed dialect must be eradicated.

Pay attention to the forms in which the farmer builds. Because they are ancestral wisdom, substance solidified. But seek out the reason behind

the form. If technological advances have made it possible to improve the form, then that improvement should always be used. The threshing flail is superseded by the threshing machine.

The plain requires a vertical construction; the mountains a horizontal one. Human work must not compete with the work of God. The Habsburg-warte²² disturbs the range of the Vienna Woods, but the Hussars' Temple²³ fits in harmoniously.

Don't think about the roof, but instead about rain and snow. That's how the farmer thinks – so in the mountains he builds the flattest roof possible, according to his technical experience. In the mountains the snow mustn't slide off when *it* wants to, but when the farmer wants it to. So he must be able to climb on to the roof to clear the snow away without putting his life in danger. We too have to make the flattest roof possible with *our* technical experience.

Be truthful! Nature can only bear truth. It can easily cope with iron lattice bridges, but it abhors gothic arches with bridge-towers and loopholes.

Don't be afraid of being rebuked for being unmodern. Changes to the old building style are only allowed when they constitute an improvement. Otherwise stick to the old. Because the truth, even if it is hundreds of years old, has more internal connections with us than the lie that walks beside us.

Extract from Ornament and Crime by Adolf Loos, Chapter: Rules for Those Building in the Mountains (1913)