The Town Mouse and the Country Mouse

From Joseph Jacobs’ *The Fables of Aesop*. London: Macmillan, 1894. (A few of the expressions were changed in order to make the stories sound more colloquial to modern ears).

One day a Town Mouse went on a visit to his cousin in the country. He was rough and ready, this cousin, but he loved his town cousin and made him heartily welcome. Beans and bacon, cheese and bread were all he had to offer, but he offered them freely. The Town Mouse turned up his long nose at this country fare and said, “I can not understand, cousin, how you can put up with such poor food as this, but of course you cannot expect anything better in the country; come with me and I will show you how to live. When you have been in town a week you will wonder how you could ever have stood country life.” No sooner said than done: the two mice set off for the town and arrived the Town Mouse’s residence late at night. “You will want some refreshment after our long journey,” said the polite Town Mouse, and took his cousin into the dining-room. There they found the remains of a fine feast and soon the two mice were eating up jellies and cakes and all that was nice. Suddenly they heard growling and barking. “What is that?” asked the Country Mouse. “It is only the dogs of the house,” answered the other. “Only!” said the Country Mouse. “I do not like such music at my dinner.” Just at that moment the door flew open, in came two huge mastiffs, and the two mice had to scamper away. “Good-bye, Cousin,” said the Country Mouse, “What! going so soon?” said the other. “Yes,” he replied:

“But better beans and bacon in peace than cakes and ale in fear.”