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A DOUBLE COMBINATION TREASURE BOX.

By ELBERT T. BENTLEY.

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ciation.]

"There's a letter for you in the box,
Billy," said the farmer. "Somepin im-
portant, I reckon."

Billy Andrews, a young farm hand,
threw down a pitchfork with which
he had been tossing hay on to a wag-
on, went to a rural delivery box on
the road and took out a letter. The
printing referred to was the firm name
and address of Cleaver, Cuttle &
Crane, attorneys at law. The letter
stated that William Henderson, Billy's
uncle, had died and before his death
had executed an instrument giving his
nephew, who had been named for him,
a farm worth \$10,000. The deed was
deposited in a safety deposit com-
pany's vault in the city. The key to the
box was at the attorneys' office, and
Billy could have it by calling for it the
next day at 3 p. m.

Obtaining leave to go to the city at
the appointed time, Billy put on his
store suit, took a train and in an hour
was in the office of Cleaver, Cuttle &
Crane. Mr. Crane received him and
read him the document by which the
farm was conveyed. It was a very
singular paper. The box at the de-
posit company was one usually rented
to business partners. It had a double
combination lock, one-half of the com-
bination being known to one partner
and the other half to the other, so
that it could only be opened when
both were present. Mr. Henderson had
given \$10,000 in bonds to another per-
son, and, for the sake of economy, so
said the instrument, had deposited the
deed and the bonds together in one of
these double combination boxes. It
was specified that either party should
go at the other's call to assist in open-
ing the box. Mr. Crane had notified
the other party to be at the deposit
company's vaults at 4 o'clock that day.

This economical arrangement was
certainly very well devised, though
Mr. Henderson had not been a money
saver, and it seemed singular that he
should so suddenly have shown such a
disposition. Mr. Crane sent a clerk
with Billy to the vaults, and the young
farmer was shown into a parlor and
asked to wait a few minutes. He
spent them wondering what the "other
fellow" looked like—if he were a farm-
er or a city chap. While he was con-
jecturing the door opened and the cus-
todian ushered in as pretty a country
girl of eighteen or thereabouts as Billy
had ever seen. She was Lucy Miller,
the owner of the bonds.

"I will take you two," said the cus-
todian, "to your box and show you the
process of opening it."

Opening several doors composed of
steel bars and several more of solid
metal, he took them into a place
where boxes were ranged in profusion.
Turning a key in the lock of their box,
the custodian opened a small, thick
door and exposed a knob. He gave
Billy a series of numbers and showed
him how to turn the knob. Then he
supplied Miss Miller with similar in-
formation. The joint owners of the
box were occupied casting sly glances
at each other, and it required several
lessons to enable them to get at their
respective treasures. When the box
was finally opened each took a look at
the contents. They expressed them-
selves satisfied, exchanged addresses
and departed.

In a couple of days Lucy Miller re-
ceived a note from Billy saying the
whole matter had been such a surprise
to him that he had not even thought
to notice the location of his farm.
Would she mind meeting him again at
an appointed time? Of course she con-
sented—she was obliged to consent—
and four days after the first opening
there was a second one. Then Lucy
wrote that some one had asked her if
her bonds were "registered" or "con-
pon," and she didn't know. She would
like him to help her unlock the box.

During the second week of the joint
ownership the box was opened four
times. On the fourth Billy told the
custodian that he needn't trouble him-
self to come with them to the box
since they now understood the opening
process perfectly. The custodian smiled
and reminded Billy that he had cer-
tainly unlocked to do himself. When
they left the office Billy looked wist-
fully at a leather covered sofa in the
parlor, wishing he and Lucy could sit
there awhile together, but the deposit
company was a place of business and
nothing else. However, when Lucy
wished to cut her coupons Billy was
permitted to go into a little 4 by 6
compartment with her while she did
the clipping.

Billy wished to take possession of
his farm, but had no money for live
stock or farming implements. This
suggested Lucy's bonds. He couldn't
steal them if he wanted to, which he
didn't, for both Lucy and the cus-
todian were present when they were
open to him. Besides, what would he
do on the farm alone? He wouldn't
think of running it without woman's
help.

One day Billy got a note from the
manager of the deposit company that
the partnership box had been rented
for only three months and the term
was about to expire. Billy and Lucy
could not leave it for another term
for the reason that their visits to their
box were so frequent that it took up
too much of the custodian's time.

On receipt of this letter Billy went
to the address Lucy Miller had given
him, and before he left her they were
married and went to live on Billy's
farm.

"What a slick feller ole Bill Hender-
son was!" said a neighbor. "How he
did play it on them two chicks he
wanted to bring together!"

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