



On the sands at Ramsgate.

THE WEIGHT OF A WORD.

"I HOPE Mrs. Hunter is not worse?" said a grave-looking gentleman to a friend who was writing with him at the same desk.

"No; on the contrary, she is better," was the reply.

A brief pause ensued, in which nothing interrupted the silence but the scratch of pens on paper, till a deep sigh from Mr. Hunter occasioned his companion to look at him intently.

"Hunter, you are not in good order; something wrong with your liver; why don't you take a holiday?" he said.

"I am quite well," answered Mr. Hunter, this time with a smile, "and don't want a holiday."

"Then what makes you sigh?" asked his friend.

"Oh, it's merely an escape of pent-up breath; you sigh sometimes, and I never bring you to book for it."

"Are his affairs going a little wrong?" thought Mr. Trafford, who was greatly attached to him.

No sooner had this idea suggested itself to him than he laid hold of it as the most probable solution of the difficulty.

"Frank," he said, "do you know any one who wants a little ready money? I should be glad to invest at a moderate interest—very moderate," he added, watching the quick response in his friend's expression.

"I'm very glad to hear it," returned Hunter; "a poor fellow applied to me the other day who would rejoice in getting a loan without usurious interest; an honest fellow, and I would have helped him, but my matters are in such trim order that I have no available money, and I don't want to disturb them."

Mr. Trafford finding he had been on a wrong scent, evaded the subject, for he did not feel so much interest in "the honest poor fellow" as to sacrifice for him what he would gladly have done for his friend.

"I could certainly tell him anything that I could tell to a friend, for I have none like him; but he would not understand me now; nor could he help me; nor could I tell him," he said to himself.

"Frank," said his wife, as Mr. Hunter was preparing shortly after this to go to the office, "you are not well; I'm sure you are not. Do go with me to Ramsgate, I shall enjoy it ten times more you know if you are with me."