

LETTER No. 4.

My Dear E.,—

The separation of the worker from his tools has been the historic mission of this great system of production; the continued gathering of them into factories and their continual improvement in productive power, have, while enlarging the stream of wealth in the form of commodities, also beggared the worker. The trick was easily turned in other branches of industry, but the turning of farming into an industry and the separation of the small owner from his tools of production took more time and skill. Yet it followed much the same course.

Before the coming of great machinery, the artisan was a most important person. Today, when children and women, by pulling a lever or turning an electric switch, can duplicate the most skilful product of the hand worker in a fraction of the time used up by a craftsman, that artisan has, perforce, to listen to the owner of the machine, the capitalist, and become his slave, for wages.

On the farms of Western Canada, the same result has been achieved, but by slightly different methods. In the days of the crooked stick, the wooden plow, the harrow made from some untrimmed log, the cradle and the reaping hook, when cleaning grain was done by throwing it into the air on a breezy day, when the muzzled ox or unbroken pony threshed the grain, the incentive to separate the worker from his tool was not very great.

The masters today are forced to own the machines because they who own the machine own the product, but in those days, since the product was almost wholly consumed by the producer, at least in Eastern Canada, capital had not much to lay hold of. In the year 1840, however, McCormick placed upon the market the first reaper, and a new era opened for farming. You will notice that as the spinning jenny "grew up"