

that can be discovered, that lies concealed in the womb of time; it is no gift of prophecy, it is only the natural and unavoidable consequences of such and such measures.

To this Franklin replies, not without force, that the internal hatred and jealousy of the American colonies one for another make their union hopeless. The events of the next fifteen years were to prove that he was wrong, and that by the conquest of Canada British power in North America had become at once too supreme, and too far removed from its base.

Then the advocate of Guadeloupe returns to the argument that the Americans will desire independence, and makes it a plea for the necessity of sufficient sugar islands in a self-sustaining empire. By keeping a due proportion between the West Indies, the Slave Coast, and the continental colonies, he says, we have a fourfold trade all within the empire. "Ask any man in most of our American plantations . . . if those West-India islands were doubled in extent and produce, if North-America would not thereby increase and double in value; its trade with these islands be doubled, as well as its trade with Britain." At present "it is there [*i. e.*, in the West Indies] the just proportion to be maintained amongst the three fails".

Franklin had argued that the best way to keep the colonies from thoughts of independence was to give them plenty of room for agriculture, and had argued—one wonders how far honest Benjamin was really sincere—that "a people spread thro' the whole tract of country on this side the Mississippi, and secured by Canada in our hands, would probably for some centuries find employment in agriculture, and thereby free us at home effectually from our fears of American manufactures".

In reply to this the author of the *Five Letters* argues forcibly that the more sugar islands we have the more will America stick to the production of farm produce and raw materials which can be sent to them. Otherwise,

They must naturally put those spare people to learn arts and trades; to make cloaths, shoes, stockings, shirts, etc., smiths, carpenters, braziers, and all the trades that flourish in England: after this is accomplished, of what utility will they be of to Great Britain? . . . but this is not all, for then she will rival you in the West-Indies: America will furnish those islands with every thing that now comes from England, and can do it cheaper. . . . Are not we the only people upon earth, except Spain, that ever thought of establishing a colony ten times more extensive than our own [country]; of richer soils and more variety of climates, productive of every individual thing that our country can yield, and yet fancy, when it comes to maturity, it will still depend upon us, or be of any kind of advantage to us: on the contrary, if it does not become our master, it must soon, very soon, stand our powerful rival in all branches of our trade.