JEAN MONNET:
THE PATH TO EUROPEAN UNITY

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Jean Monnet: The Path to European Unity

Edited by
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Introduction by George W. Ball

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Preface

When the Jean Monnet Council began its work in early 1988, it was the Monnet centennial. There was naturally much talk about how the new American organization should mark Monnet's anniversary in the year in which France would place his ashes in the Pantheon, the greatest honor which the grandest nation-state has devised to honor one of its citizens. Out of such concerns came this book.

This volume resulted from the intersection of several generations of admirers of Jean Monnet. The April 1988 Council session, with a wide range of people interested in Monnet, decided that a book of essays representing both European and American writers was the most appropriate tribute from the country this remarkable Frenchman liked so much and where he had so many friends.

The editors, who know Monnet only from his historical reputation, represent two generations of his admirers: those who remember the early post-war years and Monnet's work, and those too young for such recollections but who now recognize his enormous accomplishments. Another generation, those who worked directly with Monnet and knew those accomplishments and his characteristics firsthand, are also well represented in this unusual collection.

Selecting the essays was not an easy task. So much had been written about Monnet that even reprinting the best would take far more than one large volume. Furthermore, much of that writing was in other languages so that translations, with all of their hazards, might be required. Finally, there were still aspects of Monnet's life not fully explored for which new writing was needed. We decided, therefore, on a mixed volume of American and European authors, and of both new and published pieces, including some translations which we commissioned.

A brief word about the authors is appropriate for while each is an expert on some (or several) aspects of Monnet and his work, not every one of them is well-known in this country.

The introduction by George W. Ball, who is well known for his work in the State Department and as a commentator on

foreign affairs, sets Monnet briefly and carefully between the worlds of Europe and America, moving easily between the two. Ball worked with Monnet from the early days of World War II, later advised him in the Commissairiat du Plan in Paris after the war, gradually developed a deep friendship with him over the decades and had an American Thanksgiving dinner with him in Houjarray, the Monnet home outside Paris, just months before Monnet died there in 1979 at the age of ninety-one.

The European authors include François Duchene and Richard Mayne, two Englishmen who worked closely with Monnet from the 1950s when he was engaged in constructing the foundations of the European Community whose institutions today remain his finest monument. Their essays are both remarkable etchings of Monnet, yet quite different from each other; Duchene's shrewdly analyzes the Monnet method, a topic he has studied for several years; Mayne writes a brief biography of the 'Gray Eminence', full of personal touches and clear insights.

Three Frenchmen, each close to Monnet for many years, are represented by newly-translated accounts of Monnet's influence in both European events and in their own quite distinctive lives. The first is François Fontaine, who worked with Monnet for over thirty years, and who wrote the fine piece 'Forward With Jean Monnet' partly, he notes, to encourage other close friends to share their recollections and partly because Monnet himself was so sparing in his *Memoirs* in giving space to the personal side of his long life. Fontaine tries in his essay to point out some features of that life with rare insight and great admiration.

A second French compatriot of Monnet represented here is Robert Marjolin from whose own memoirs, *Le travail d'une vie*, two sections are excerpted here: the first on Monnet and de Gaulle, the other on the European Community. Both show Marjolin's sharp insights and the second also unveils the limits of Marjolin's admiration of Monnet's work in constructing a supranational Europe.

The final essay by a Frenchman, and the last in the book, is a moving tribute by Jacques Van Helmont, 'Jean Monnet As He Was'. This small essay, possible only by one who knew Monnet intimately and observed him incessantly, is sparse. It

contains few adjectives, little praise, and is largely a recitation of some mundane aspects of Monnet the man: how he breathed, and worried about his health; how he travelled; how he worried decisions and events almost to death until he dominated them; how he lived with change, and why he found the United States and its citizens so compatible.

The American authors begin with Robert Nathan's firsthand account of Monnet during World War II when they worked together to plan the great increases in American military production from their relatively modest perches in the expanding Washington power game in the early 1940s.

Irwin Wall and John Gillingham, two American historians, tell fascinating stories of Monnet as head of France's first Plan from 1946–52 and as head of the High Authority of the European Coal and Steel Community, respectively. Together these accounts bridge the movement of Monnet from private citizen and banker, pressed into wartime service as experienced expediter, to government planner and master builder of the new institutions of postwar Europe.

The result, as with all writing, must speak for itself. We can only commend the authors for their contributions and their generosity in making them available to the Jean Monnet Council for this volume.

D.B. and C.H.

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They are also grateful to the support given in the preparation of the manuscript by Hofstra University's Secretarial Services and the Center for American-Netherlands Studies.

Finally, they wish to acknowledge the support and understanding of the Jean Monnet Council (incorporated as the American Council for Jean Monnet Studies), the sponsor of this volume which is one of the Council's major efforts to make Monnet and his accomplishments better known in the United States.

The Contributors

George W. Ball is one of America's foremost experts on US-European affairs. He served as Under Secretary of State in the Kennedy and Johnson administrations (1961–6). An international lawyer, Ball worked closely with Jean Monnet on plans for the new European Coal and Steel Community. He later represented it and several other Common Market agencies in the US.

Douglas Brinkley is Assistant Professor of History and Teaching Fellow, New College, Hofstra University, where he is also co-director of the Center For American-Netherlands Studies. He earned his doctorate from Georgetown University and has since authored several articles on US diplomatic history in addition to *After the Creation; Dean Acheson and American Foreign Policy 1953–1971* (New Haven, Conn., 1991).

François Duchene is an English collaborator of Monnet who worked directly with him in 1952–5 at the Coal and Steel Community and in 1958–63 at the Action Committee. Duchene is completing a major analysis of the working methods of Monnet's varied accomplishments.

François Fontaine is one of France's preeminent spokesmen on European integration affairs. Besides working with Jean Monnet for more than thirty years and collaborating on the *Memoirs*, Fontaine has had two other careers: as a best-selling novelist of ancient Rome and as an information official of the European Community for many years.

John Gillingham is Professor of History at the University of Missouri-St Louis where he has also served as Director of the Truman Era Research Program. He has recently completed his third book, *Coal, Steel and the Rebirth of Europe, 1945–1955: The Germans and French from Reunification to Economic Community* (Cambridge, 1991). He is researching a biography of Jean Monnet.

Clifford Hackett is Executive Director of the American Council For Jean Monnet Studies. Following ten years in the foreign service, he spent more than thirteen years working on Capitol Hill where he became interested in the European

Community. He recently finished a book on its history and institutions, *Cautious Revolution: The European Community Arrives* (Westport, Conn., 1990).

Robert Marjolin was an internationally known economist who played a leading role in the post-World War II restructuring of Europe. Although not entirely sympathetic with certain aspects of Monnet's supranationalism, they worked closely together for many years. He completed his *Memoirs 1911–1986* shortly before his death.

Richard Mayne is an English writer who worked with Monnet in 1956–8 and again in 1963–6 in the Action Committee for a United States of Europe. He has written several well-received books on post-war Europe and translated Monnet's *Memoirs* into English. He is also a broadcaster and book and film critic.

Robert R. Nathan is one of Washington's leading international economic consultants. One of Monnet's few early acquaintances still living, Robert Nathan is a well-known American economist and political leader who still directs his own consulting firm assisting governments and business on complex economic analyses.

Jacques Van Helmont is an astute French analyst of European Community affairs. When he started to work on the post-war Plan for France in 1946, he began a close relationship with Monnet and his work which included the entire life span of the Action Committee until it was disbanded in 1975 upon Monnet's retirement.

Irwin M. Wall is Professor of History at the University of California, Riverside. He is the author of *French Communism and the Era of Stalin: The Quest for Unity and Integration, 1945–1962* (Westport, Conn., 1983) and numerous articles on contemporary French history. His latest book, *L'Influence americaine sur la politique francaise, 1945–1954* (Paris, 1989) is currently being revised for English language publication.

Introduction

George W. Ball

Over the long reaches of history, ambitious men and women have sought to achieve the unity of Europe – usually by military might. But no serious peaceful progress was made until after the Second World War when Jean Monnet set in motion the long march toward unity by proposing a European Coal and Steel Community.

Coal and steel had special significance in the early 1950s, since those commodities had provided the basic raw materials for fighting two world wars. Monnet, who passionately abhorred war as both cruel and irrational, perceptively foresaw that the pooling of coal and steel might not only soften national rivalries but also help tie West Germany tightly to the West. What was needed was to reconcile dominant but disparate motivations: the French interest in gaining and maintaining equality with Germany and the German interest in achieving political rehabilitation.

We have by now become so suffocatingly aware of the Cold War that we find it hard to realize that the dark specter overhanging Europe in the early postwar years was not what Mr Reagan referred to as the 'evil empire' but rather the threat of a resurgent Germany.

In that atmosphere Monnet clearly predicted that, when the bombs finally stopped falling in Europe, the French government would be moved by conditioned reflex to try, as its predecessors had unsuccessfully tried in the past, to block Germany's aggressive tendencies by massive force and to inhibit its economic recovery. At the same time America, seeking to rehabilitate Germany as the engine of European economic recovery, was assisting that truncated new state to rebuild.

Monnet sought a fresh solution that would reconcile both these pressures. Under the Schuman Plan which he proposed, Germany would be permitted, even encouraged, to rebuild, but within the framework of a united Europe rather than merely as a nation state. Of course, a united Europe

would not be easy to achieve; Monnet had seen too many well-intended but futile efforts to achieve effective cooperation among governments, and he knew that without some transfer of sovereignty from the national governments the result would be mere organized impotence.

Yet, given the realities of day-to-day national politics, how could he ever achieve the necessary transfer of substantial power from governments to European institutions? Monnet knew that he could never persuade governments to give up sovereignty over a wide spectrum of their affairs; but, he thought, they might well be persuaded to yield major attributes of their sovereignty in a limited economic sector. His strategy was roughly equivalent to a tank warfare tactic General de Gaulle had futilely advocated in the late thirties: concentrate all available power at a specific point, then spread out behind the lines. Once a breakthrough had been accomplished with regard to coal and steel, Monnet believed that the jurisdiction of the new institutions could then be expanded.

There was well-conceived method in this apparent madness. All of us working with Monnet well understood that it was quite unreasonable to carve a single economic sector out of the jurisdiction of national governments and subject it to the control of international institutions. Yet, with his usual perspicacity, Monnet recognized that the very irrationality of the scheme would compel progress and might then start a chain reaction. The awkwardness and complexity resulting from the singling-out of coal and steel would compel member governments to pool other production as well.

That assumption was, of course, validated by events, but only after two transient diversions: abortive efforts to bring about a European army and to pool the development of nuclear power through Euratom. Still those detours did not prevent the six nations of the Coal and Steel Community in 1957 from signing the Treaty of Rome, which called into being a European Economic Community empowered to create and supervise a common market.

Like the Coal and Steel Community, the EEC was designed for the future with full-fledged institutions – an executive, a court and an assembly. Yet because over the years the executive body, the Commission, seemed to have contracted

the traditional symptoms of creeping hypertrophy – a huge bureaucracy and a swollen budget – many Americans came to take the Community for granted, and to assume that it would remain a half-completed edifice.

What its critics failed to foresee, however, was the traumatic impact of intensifying economic competition, primarily from Japan and the little dragons of Asia. That recent development slowly brought home to Europe's industrialists, financiers and businessmen the reluctant recognition that, as economic and commercial units, the nation states of Europe were anachronisms – no longer adequate for the current age of rapid travel, instant communications and computers that enable management to function effectively at long distance. In that new environment the European nations found their internal markets too limited to permit their industries to realize the full economies of scale indispensable to their effective competition in the expanding world market, while the rapid internationalization of financial markets and transactions sharply emphasized the need to save Europe from the high costs of its economic fragmentation.

These ideas again inspired a fresh initiative when, on becoming President of the European Commission in 1985, a former French Finance Minister, Jacques Delors, proposed the completion of a vast European internal market. Delors not only presented his scheme to the member governments but enlisted Lord Cockfield, the commissioner of the Internal Market and a former businessman, to give the plan concrete form. Cockfield prepared a White Paper listing nearly 300 measures needed to bring about a single integrated market where there could be free movement of goods, services, people and capital, and he provided a detailed timetable for the member governments of the Community to adopt the necessary common legislation by 31 December 1992.

The achievement of Cockfield's deadline was aided when those governments enacted a measure quaintly called the 'Single European Act'. That act increased the powers of the institutions of the European Community; in particular it facilitated the task of meeting the 1992 deadline by providing that most of the Cockfield measures could be enacted by

a mere 'qualified majority' of the Council of Ministers rather than by unanimity.

Delors' scheme gained additional momentum when, in a case involving the import of a cassis drink, the European Court of Justice upheld and applied a provision of the Single European Act granting the Council of Ministers of the European Community power to 'decide that provisions in force in a member state must be recognized as being equivalent to those applied by another'. When coupled with the Single European Act, that decision could well mean for Europe what the interstate commerce clause has meant for America.

I shall not review here the complicated problems requiring resolution before complete economic integration can be even substantially achieved. No doubt there will be some slippage and by no means all of its provisions will be in place by 1992. It is problematical, for example, how soon Europe will be able to get rid of customs houses on national boundaries, since the free movement of peoples contemplated by Delors' concept involves not merely duty collections, which will be eliminated, but police and demographic controls, which present greater problems. So I cannot predict when the Milanese doctor will be able to set up practice in Lyons without being subject to qualifying examinations. Quite likely the most rapid progress will be made in the financial area since funds are, by their nature, fungible and their movement instantaneous and invisible.

Meanwhile, the scheme is getting a mixed press in America. Some of our larger enterprises see the opening of new opportunities and are rushing to exploit them; yet the same business mentality that denounced the Coal and Steel Community as merely a cartel is now loudly predicting that the new European single market will be – or in time will become – an economic citadel with its gates bolted against our own production. Of course, I do not doubt that the spirit of Colbert still hovers over some sectors of Europe's economic life – and particularly agriculture – but it will be countered, as it was thirty years ago, by even stronger anti-protectionist pressures. All one can be sure of is that the new single European economy will not be born without labor pains.

But if no one can tell with precision what specific items of the agenda will be realized by 1992, substantial progress is steadily and rapidly being made and, particularly among younger Europeans, the movement has acquired remarkable momentum. But, because events are moving so fast and unpredictably, I shall refrain from offering a detailed analysis of the prospects of the European Single Market, and instead address a more agreeable, though essentially nostalgic task: to reflect a little about Jean Monnet.

We recently marked the centenary year of Jean Monnet's birth and, at long last, he is being recognized in France as the father of European unity. Indeed, in November 1988 his ashes were transferred to the Pantheon, to rest among those of other French immortals.

I knew Jean Monnet well for the last three decades of his life, and, along with a handful of other Americans and a number of Europeans, worked closely with him for at least twenty years.

Since, in retrospect, Monnet's methods of operation may be quite as interesting as his philosophical thoughts about Europe, I shall limit myself to a few words regarding the rationale that inspired Monnet's initiatives and comment briefly on his idiosyncratic methods. The fact that he redrew the economic map of Europe so extensively without ever holding elective office makes him almost unique in history. Monnet had a clear view of the role he could effectively play. European ministers with large governmental responsibilities or American cabinet secretaries presiding over large departments are, he believed, so occupied with day-to-day problems that they have no time to think or plan for the future. Monnet saw himself as a man who did not think about problems in long time spans, and he took fruitful advantage of the old adage that the man of vision has no power while the man of power frequently has no vision. It was his role, as he saw it, to provide vision to the man of power, to furnish the conceptual basis for action to be taken by governments.

One secret of Jean's effectiveness, many of us suspected, was his lack of personal ambition; because he never challenged a political figure as a rival, he could easily gain his audience. Nor was Monnet in the slightest degree impressed by rank; he was quite prepared to spend days with junior civil

servants, and he achieved his most formidable objectives not by going directly to the top, but by first working with those modest toilers in the governmental vineyards who actually prepared the first drafts of documents and provided their bosses with advice and information. He had an infallible instinct for the *loci* of power and he quickly discovered, from his wide circle of friends, who in any political situation was worth educating.

Monnet, furthermore, had the advantage of a richly diverse career in which he had been employed in his father's brandy business, traveling the world selling cognac. Then, during the First World War as a young man of twenty-six, he arranged through a family solicitor for an audience with Prime Minister Viviani. He proved so effective in persuading Viviani of the desperate need to coordinate the Anglo-French supply effort that Viviani sent him to London as a member of the French Liaison Committee, where he met Arthur Salter and other rising young Britons who were to form his close friends over many years.

Thereafter he engaged in a variety of activities all heavily colored by his interests in a more pacific world order. At the age of thirty he became Deputy Secretary-General of the League of Nations where, among other things, he led the negotiations regarding Silesia and the Saar, and the rehabilitation of Austria. Then, after a respite while he resuscitated the family brandy business, he joined the Paris branch of a New York investment banking firm, which floated loans for the Polish and Rumanian Governments, which ultimately took him to Wall Street, where he played a major role in large affairs, involved himself in a major struggle with Giannini and, in the course of his work, acquired a distinguished group of American friends, including John Foster Dulles and Jack McCloy. He then served for a year in Shanghai developing and negotiating a reconstruction plan that would attract Chinese and international capital.

Before the Second World War broke out he arranged to be sent to America by the French Air Ministry to negotiate the purchase of aircraft and, foreseeing America's ultimate involvement, he helped persuade President Roosevelt of the need for a vast expansion of American war production. When France was about to fall, he arranged, through his

British friends, to gain the agreement of Winston Churchill for an offer to the French of equal citizenship with the British, but unfortunately, by the time the document had been prepared and taken to Bordeaux, where the French Government was then in exile, Petain had taken over and France had surrendered.

Jean Monnet was known to his friends as an incorrigible optimist, yet his optimism did not stem from a Panglossian conviction that all was for the best in the best of all possible worlds but rather from a belief in the logic of events and the essential rationality of man – a dauntless faith in the ineluctable direction of deeply-moving forces. Thus, as I constantly discovered on working with him, he was never put off course by disappointments; instead he would say with a Gallic shrug, 'What has happened has happened, but it does not affect anything fundamental. We must find a way around it.' His resilience reflected an attitude he found expressed in a passage from a biography of Ibn Saud written by a French author which Monnet showed me very early in our work together. It contained the passage: 'A Western visitor asked Ibn Saud the secret of his success. Ibn Saud replied, "God appeared to me in the desert when I was a young man and said something which has guided my actions throughout my life. He told me: 'For me, everything is a means – even the obstacles'."'[1]

I vividly recalled that advice on one occasion, just after the preparatory conference on the Coal and Steel Community had begun on 20 June 1950. On Sunday, 25 June, I had gone to Houjarray, Monnet's thatch-roofed house near Paris, for a day of work, and during the afternoon three or four Europeans from other delegations also arrived. Then the telephone rang with the shocking news that the North Korean army had invaded South Korea.

Monnet reacted after only a moment's reflection. 'You Americans', he said to me, 'will never permit the Communists to succeed with such aggression. You cannot afford to let them begin the erosion of lines drawn during the postwar years. Yet an American intervention in Korea could clearly jeopardize the Schuman Plan. It may create panic in Europe, and it will almost certainly increase American insistence on a larger German role in the defense of the West. We both

know what the rearming of Germany could mean.'

Although Monnet feared that the prospect of a rearmed Germany could lead Frenchmen to hesitate before entering the Coal and Steel Community with the Germans, he reacted as usual to the appearance of a new obstacle; what we should do, he insisted, was to follow God's advice to Ibn Saud and make it a means to our larger objective.

To forestall the rearmament of Germany as a nation state, Monnet decided to push forward far sooner than he had intended with a scheme to organize Europe's defense roughly along the lines of the Schuman Plan. So he enlisted the support of Prime Minister René Pleven, who had earlier assisted Monnet in the League of Nations Polish loan negotiations. Monnet's tactic was to persuade the French government to take a public position rejecting German rearmament on a national basis, but suggesting instead the formation of a European army including units from Germany with a European Defense Community. On 24 October 1950, Pleven presented such a plan to the French Assembly, which approved it, thus marking the beginning of what the late Raymond Aron was to describe as 'the greatest ideological and political debate France had known since the Dreyfus Affair'. In the end, of course, the European Defense Community foundered on the rock of French nationalism. But meanwhile, the European concept was kept alive by other measures.

Perhaps Monnet's greatest disappointment was his failure to persuade the British to join from the beginning in his efforts to build Europe – first through the Schuman Plan and later the Economic Community. He knew the British well, and he greatly respected their skills in politics and institution building. Yet, though he spent long hours trying to persuade his British friends to 'be present at the creation', he was not dismayed – or even surprised – when they held off. The British, he said, had an infallible instinct for *fait accompli*; 'if we go forward and show concrete results, they will join at the right time'.

Of course, history proved him right. When the British began to fear that their cherished 'special relationship' with the United States might be imperiled by America's fascination with the new European institutions, they took steps to

join; and, though Britain's first efforts were frustrated by De Gaulle's narrow nationalism, Great Britain finally took its place in Brussels. Meanwhile, lacking British help, Monnet went forward with what then seemed the unorthodox scheme of founding European union not on the historic Anglo-French entente but on a Franco-German base.

It was a shock to conservative Frenchmen that France should even be talking to the Germans about a common effort so soon after the war; to tie French fortunes to those of Germany in a European context was for many unthinkable. To offer Germany equality with other European nations, which Monnet thought essential, required the sublimation of French feelings of national inferiority, while it broke with the pretensions of French leaders to diplomatic superiority. The fact that Monnet succeeded in using Franco-German *rapprochement* as the basic component in the structure of the new Europe was greatly helped by the presence in Bonn of Chancellor Adenauer and of Jack McCloy, then High Commissioner. Both men had the wisdom to comprehend Monnet's vision.

Monnet was completely aware of the implications of what he was trying to start, saying, 'One change begets another. The chain reaction has only begun. We are starting a process of continuous reform which can shape tomorrow's world more lastingly than the principles of revolution so widespread outside the West.' Though Monnet had no illusions about the possibility of changing human nature, he was convinced that by altering the conditions under which people lived, they would adapt to the new reality. 'Europe', he said, 'will not be conjured up at a stroke, nor by an overall design, it will be attained by concrete achievements generating an active community of interest.' That was the point of the Schuman Plan and of the Economic Community which followed. Those schemes upset old balances of power and applied pressure at limited, but vital, points to change political prospects.

When I first began working with Monnet, he showed me a passage from a Swiss writer, Henri-Frédéric Amiel – to whom I had not given a thought since my undergraduate days – and commended it to me as the ultimate wisdom. Amiel had written, 'The experience of each person is a new

beginning. Only institutions grow wiser: they store up the collective experience and, from this experience and wisdom, men subject to the same laws will gradually find, not their nature changed but that their behavior does.' And Amiel added, 'It is institutions that govern relationships between people. They are the real pillars of civilization.'[2]

Recently a brilliant European, half-British, half-Swiss, named François Duchene, has undertaken to analyze Monnet's concepts and methods in a study which is summarized in his essay in this volume. He notes not only that Monnet believed that institutions could shape popular conduct but also that equality before common rules was as urgently needed between nations as between individuals; only thus could one create a sense of joint responsibility for the application of those rules to all participants in a community.

With an astute sense of timing, Monnet was firmly convinced that novel ideas should be advanced at moments when the contradictions of the *status quo* forced political leaders to question their own assumptions. Thus, as he himself wrote in his memoirs, 'I have always believed that Europe will be established through crises and that the outcome will be the sum of the outcomes of those crises'.

Monnet was able to succeed, Duchene suggests, because his principal period of creativeness occurred within the quarter century between 1938 and 1963 – a war and post-war period, when most of continental Europe had been destroyed and institutions and networks of loyalty deeply shaken.

His working methods were extraordinary. Although he produced highly persuasive documents, I never saw him write anything himself. He simply talked while people wrote and for a long time I was one of his amanuenses – even a simple letter went through as many as twenty drafts. Unfortunately for my comfort, he thought most effectively when he walked, and whenever I would stay overnight at his house in Houjarray, he and I would have breakfast, together, then Jean would hand me a cane, open the door and say, 'Start talking'.

I would try to fill him in about developments in America or whatever else I thought might interest him. Then, as we climbed up over the pleasant hills, he would suddenly grab my arm and point out a bucolic scene saying, 'Isn't that

beautiful! Can you imagine a more lovely view than this? This is a great country and we must see that its qualities are put to good use'. Then, he would turn and, just as abruptly, seize my arm and say, 'Start talking again'.

NOTES

1. Quoted in Jean Monnet, *Memoirs* (Garden City, New York, 1978), 399.
2. A similar version of the Amiel aphorism is quoted in Monnet's *Memoirs*, op. cit., 393.