The Great Moving Nowhere Show

Tony Blair has talked much about 'the project'.
But what precisely is it? Stripped of the hyperbole,
the continuities with Thatcherism are all too obvious.
Stuart Hall examines a great missed opportunity

What is the political character of the Blair regime? Is
New Labour a radically new response to the core
political issues of our time? Is its perspective as
broad in sweep, modern in outlook and coherent as
Thatcherism's neo-liberal project, only different - because it is
breaking decisively with the legacy and logic of
the Thatcher years? Or is it a series of pragmatic
adjustments and adaptive moves to
essentially Thatcherite terrain? Since taking
office, New Labour has certainly been
hyperactive, setting policy reviews in place here,
legislatively and innovating there. A
careful audit of the achievements and
failures of these early years remains to be
made. But that is for a different occasion.
Here, we want to stay with "the big picture".
Where is New Labour really going? Does
Mr Blair have a political project?

Thatcherism, from which Mr Blair has
learned so much, certainly did have a project.
Its aim was to transform the political
landscape, irrevocably: to make us think in
and speak its language as if there were no
other. It had a strategy - an idea of where it
wanted to get to and how to get there. Mrs
Thatcher had no fondness for intellectuals:
the word 'ideas' did not trip lightly off her
tongue. Nevertheless, everything she did
was animated by a social 'philosophy'.
From a reductive reading of Adam Smith,
she learned to see individuals as exclusive-
ly economic agents. From Hayek, she
learned that the social good is impossible to
define and that to try to harness markets to
social objectives led down a one-way slip-
ppery slope to the nanny state, misguided
social engineering, welfare dependence and
moral degeneration - 'There is No Such
Thing As Society'. From the Monetarists
she learned market fundamentalism: mar-
kets are 'good' and work mysteriously to the
benefit of all; they are self-instituting and
self-regulating entities; market ratio-
nality is the only valid mode of social cal-
culation, 'market forces must prevail!'

What is more, she armed herself with a
decisive analysis of the points of historical
change which had created the opening to
Thatcherism. But she did not, like some
versions of the 'Third Way', simply project
the sociological trends on to the political
screen. She never supposed Thatcherite sub-
jects were already out there, fully formed,
requiring only to be focus-grouped into
position. Instead, she set out to produce
new political subjects - Entrepreneurial
Man - out of the mix of altruism and com-
petitiveness of which ordinary mortals are
composed. Above all she knew that, to
achieve radical change, politics must be
conducted like a war of position between
adversaries. She clearly identified her ene-
mies, remorselessly dividing the political
field. Wets v Drys. Us v Them, those who
are 'with us' v 'the enemy within'.

When Marxism Today first began to dis-
cuss Thatcherism as a 'project', smart-arsed
journalists and Labour analysts joined
forces to pour scorn on the idea - a thought
altogether too concerted and 'continental'
for the empiricist temper of British political
culture. Geoff Mulgan - Director of
Demos, former MT contributor and now in
the Number 10 Policy Unit - advances a
similar view elsewhere in this issue. 'Meta-
political' questions, he says, are irrelevant -
a sign that the left intellectuals who ask
them are hopelessly isolated from the 'real'
business of government. They would be
better employed, like Demos, thinking up
concrete proposals which New Labour
could put into effect.

Guilty British academics on the left are
particularly vulnerable to this kind of gross
anti-intellectualism. However, Mulgan's
position seems disingenuous. Of course,
policy innovation is essential to any politi-
cal strategy - that is why Martin Jacques
dreamed up the idea of Demos in the first
place. There is lots of room for lateral
thinking. But - Mr Blair's Rendezvous
With Destiny notwithstanding - May 1997
was not the start of 'Year Zero'. All ques-
tions of perspective and strategy have not
been 'solved'. As Decca Aitkenhead put it
recently, the Blairites sometimes behave as if
'Number 10 is sorted for nuts and bolts; it's just not sure what sort of machine they
add up to'. In fact, it's impossible to know
how radical and innovative a concrete pro-
posal is until you know which strategy it is
attempting to put in place and the criteria
against which its 'radicalism' is being
assessed. Without a strategic framework,
the 'concrete proposals' could be brilliant;
or they could just be off-the-wall - com-
pletely batty. In recent months, Mulgan has
offered us plenty of both kinds.

In fact, seen in the context of New
Labour's sustained hype and vaunting
ambition over the past 18 months, Mul-
gan's idea that nothing requires serious
attention apart from pragmatic effective-
ness is not only wrong but curiously 'off-
message' and wholly out of synch with His
Master's Voice. It was clear from the outset
that Mr Blair saw himself in the Thatch-
erite mould and has worked hard to
model himself on her style of leadership.
And with some success! Recent polls sug-
gest the electorate is impressed with 'what
they regard as the strong Thatcherite style',
though they also seem unsure whether this is
more than 'better gloss, more PR and
spin' and, more worryingly, they doubt that
New Labour 'will make a real difference
and force a clean policy break with the Tory
Mr Blair has also modelled his ambitions to
make everything in Britain 'New' on
Thatcherism's project of national self-
renewal. Consequently, these days, no New
Labour spokesperson opens his/her mouth,
or journalist reports the event, without
reference to 'the Blair project'. It is New
Labour, not the intellectuals, who put this
'meta-political' question on the agenda. It is
Blair who talks of New Labour in apoca-
lyptic terms - 'one of the great, radical,
reforming governments of our history', 'to
be nothing less than the model twenty-first
century nation, a beacon to the world',
becoming the natural party of govern-
ment'. ('Natural parties of government' are
those whose ideas lead on all fronts, carry-
ing authority in every domain of life; whose
philosophy of change has become the com-
mon sense of the age. In the old days we
used to call them 'hegemonic'.) Mr Blair is
definitely into 'the vision thing'.

New Labour's latest bid to give
'this vision thing' historic cred-
bility and so to capture and
define 'the big picture' is the
'Third Way'. This comes in several shapes
and sizes. There is the intellectual's version of
the 'Third Way' offered by Anthony
Giddens. Mr Blair's most influential intel-
lectual, which sketches out a number of sig-
ificantly novel sociological shifts which
seem to have major political consequences.
Many of these one would be happy to agree
with or to debate further. After all, eco-
nomic globalisation is a reality and has
transformed the space of operations and the
'reach' of nation states and national
economies. There is a new individualism
abroad, due to the growing social complex-
ty and diversity of modern life, which has
undermined much of the old collectivism
and the political programmes it under-
pinned. Many problems have new challenges or assume new forms not well
covered by the old political ideologies. We
do need to broker a new relationship
between markets and the public good, the
individual and the community. These
sociological shifts are part of the great

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historical rupture - the onset of late-late-modernity - which Thatcherism first mastered politically but certainly did not originate or set in motion. This is where Marxism Today’s ‘New Times’ analysis and its call for the reinvention of the left began, all those years ago. So much is indeed shared territory.

But when we move from the intellectual to New Labour’s more political and strategic version of the ‘Third Way’, we are less on the terrain of political strategy and more, as Francis Wheen recently observed, in some ‘vacant space between the Fourth Dimension and the Second Coming’. The ‘Third Way’ has been hyped as ‘a new kind of politics’. Its central claim is the discovery of a mysterious middle ground between the existing extremes. However, the closer one examines this via media, the more it looks, not like a way through the problems, but a soft-headed way around them. It speaks of ‘a new kind of polities’. Its central claim is the discovery of a mysterious middle ground between the existing extremes. However, the closer one examines this via media, the more it looks, not like a way through the problems, but a soft-headed way around them. It speaks of ‘a new kind of polities’. Its central claim is the discovery of a mysterious middle ground between the existing extremes. However, the closer one examines this via media, the more it looks, not like a way through the problems, but a soft-headed way around them. It speaks of ‘a new kind of polities’. Its central claim is the discovery of a mysterious middle ground between the existing extremes. However, the closer one examines this via media, the more it looks, not like a way through the problems, but a soft-headed way around them. It speaks of ‘a new kind of polities’. Its central claim is the discovery of a mysterious middle ground between the existing extremes. However, the closer one examines this via media, the more it looks, not like a way through the problems, but a soft-headed way around them. It speaks of ‘a new kind of polities'.

The ‘Third Way’ speaks as if there are no longer any conflicting interests which cannot be reconciled. It also has transcended them - to be ‘beyond Right and Left’. These shifting formulations are not quite what one would call a project with a clear political profile. In so far as one can make out what it is claiming, does it offer a correct strategic perspective? The fact - of which the ‘Third Way’ makes a great deal - that many of the traditional solutions of the left seem historically exhausted, that its programme needed to be radically overhauled and that there are new problems which outrun its analytic framework, does not mean that its principles have nothing to offer to the task of political renewal on the left. Welfare reform is only one of many areas where there is a continuing debate between two clearly competing models, drawing on if not identical with, the two great traditions that have governed political life: the left-of-centre version, looking for new forms in which to promote social solidarity, interdependence and collective social provision against market inequality and instability; and the neo-liberal, promoting low taxes, a competitive view of human nature, market provision and individualism. Can the ‘tough decisions’ on welfare which New Labour have been ‘taking’ for 18 months really be ‘beyond Left and Right’? Or is that a smoke-screen thrown up to evade the really hard questions of political principle which remain deeply unresolved.

One of the core reasons for the ‘Third Way’s semantic inexactitude - measured by the promiscuous proliferation of such troubling adverbs as ‘between’, ‘above’ and ‘beyond’ - is its efforts to be all-inclusive. It has no enemies. Everyone can belong. The ‘Third Way’ speaks as if there are no longer any conflicting interests which cannot be reconciled. It therefore envisages a ‘politics without adversaries’. This suggests that, by some miracle of transcendence, the interests represented by, say, the ban on tobacco advertising and ‘Formula One’, the private car lobby and John Prescott’s White Paper, an ethical foreign policy and the sale of arms to Indonesia, media diversity and the concentrated drive-to-global-power of Rupert Murdoch’s media empire have been effortlessly harmonised on a Higher Plane, above politics. Whereas, it needs to be clearly said that a project to transform and modernise society in a radical direction, which does not disturb any existing interests and has no enemies, is not a serious political enterprise.

The ‘Third Way’ is hot on the responsibilities of individuals, but those of business are passed over with a slippery evasiveness. ‘Companies,’ Tony Blair argues in his Fabian pamphlet The Third Way, ‘will devise ways to share with their staff the wealth their know-how creates.’ Will they? The ‘Third Way’ does observe accelerating social inequality but refuses to acknowledge that there might be structural interests preventing our achieving a more equitable distribution of wealth and life-chances. As Ross McKibbin recently remarked, although most people ‘do believe that society should be based on some notion of fairness’, they also believe ‘that the rich and powerful can only be made to acknowledge this by political action’. The ‘Third Way’s discourse, however, is disconcertingly devoid of any sustained reference to power. Mr Blair is constantly directing us, instead, to ‘values’. But when one asks, ‘Which values?’ a rousing but platitudinous ‘It therefore seems most unlikely that the shifting tendencies and ambiguous formulations of the ‘Third Way’ offers us clear guidelines for assessing the underlying thrust of the Blair political project. For an answer to our original question, we will need to look at the Blair performance overall, sifting the strong tendencies from the eb and flow of everyday governance.
trying to disinter from its practice its underlying political logic, philosophy and strategic direction.

In the global context, New Labour has brought a sweeping interpretation of globalisation, which it regards as the single most important factor which has transformed our world, setting an impassable threshold between New Labour and Old, now and everything that went before. This is crucial because, in our view, it is its commitment to a certain definition of globalisation which provides the outer horizon as well as the dubious legitimacy to Mr Blair’s whole political project.

New Labour understands globalisation in very simplistic terms - as a single, uncontradictory, uni-directional phenomenon, exhibiting the same features and producing the same inevitable outcomes everywhere. Despite Giddens’s strictures, New Labour does deal with globalisation as if it is a self-regulating and implacable Force of Nature. It treats the global economy as being, in effect, like the weather. In his speech to the Labour Party conference, Mr Blair portrayed the global economy as moving so fast, its financial flows so gigantic and so speedy, the pace at which it has plunged a third of the world economy into crisis so rapid, that its operations are now effectively beyond the control of nation states and probably of regional and international agencies as well. He calls this, with a weary finality, ‘the way of the world’.

His response is to ‘manage change’. But it seems that what he really means is that we must ‘manage ourselves to adapt to changes which we cannot otherwise control’ - a similar sounding but substantively very different kettle of fish.

This accounts for the passivity of the Blair government, despite its pivotal role in Europe and leading position in the G7 etc, in the face of the current crisis in Asia, Russia and elsewhere. It continued until very late to reiterate the false reassurances that the Asian crisis would have little noticeable effect on Britain. It has shown a surprising lack of flexibility in the face of mounting evidence to the contrary. It seems content to reiterate the mantra: ‘The goal of economic policy is to maximise the efficiency of private sector resource allocation’.

New Labour appears to have been seduced by the neo-liberal gospel that ‘the global market’ is an automatic and self-instituting principle, requiring no particular social, cultural, political or institutional framework. It can be ‘applied’ under any conditions, anywhere. New Labour therefore - like Friedman and many others - has become a neo-liberal hot-gospeller that Japanese bankers just don’t actually behave like Wall Street bankers, and that if you dump ‘the market’ into a state-socialist society like Russia without transforming its political institutions or its culture - a much slower and more complex operation - is likely to produce, not Adam Smith’s natural barterers and truckers, but a capitalist mafia. As Andrew Marr shrewdly observed, ‘It’s the politics, stupid!’

Since globalisation is a fact of life to which There Is No Alternative, and national governments cannot hope to regulate or impose any order on its processes or effects, New Labour has accordingly largely withdrawn from the active management of the economy (in the long run, Keynes is dead!). What it has done, instead, is to set about vigorously adapting society to the global economy’s needs, tutoring its citizens to be self-sufficient and self-reliant in order to compete more successfully in the global marketplace. The framing strategy of New Labour’s economic repertoire remains essentially the neo-liberal one: the deregulation of markets, the wholesale privatisation of public assets, low taxation, breaking the ‘inhibitions’ to market flexibility, institutionalising the culture of private provision and personal risk, and privileging in its moral discourse the values of self-sufficiency, competitiveness and entrepreneurial dynamism.

Economic Man or as s/he came to be called, The Enterprise Subject and the Sovereign Consumer, have supplanted the idea of the citizen and the public sphere. As the government’s Annual Report boldly reminded us: ‘People are not only citizens, they are also customers’. The most significant breaches in this neo-liberal edifice were the statutory minimum wage and the Working Time directive - commitments New Labour would have been too abject to abandon. It has, however, set the minimum wage at the lowest politically-negotiable level, excluding the sector most at risk to structural unemployment - young people between 18 and 21.

Giving the Bank of England its independence may have been a good idea. But only a touching faith in economic automatism can explain why this meant restricting its brief, effectively, to one dimension of economic policy only - inflation - with, in effect, only one tool of economic management - interest rates. It suggests that

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is the high priests of global neo-liberalism - Jeffrey Sachs, Paul Krugman and George Soros - not Blair and Brown, who have led the retreat towards regulation.

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Labour has been quietly seduced by the neo-liberal view that, as far as possible, the economy must be treated like a machine, obeying economic ‘laws’ without human intervention. In practice, what is gained in credibility by being able to say - ‘The Government is not involved! Rising interest rates, an over-valued currency, falling order books and rising regional unemployment have nothing to do with us. They are unfortunate ‘facts of life’ which folks must simply put up with. You can’t buck global trends!’ - is lost in terms of strategic control. Whether New Labour acknowledges
this or not, its effect is automatically to pri-
omise meeting inflation targets over every-
th ing else. The irony is that it is precisely the
whole structure of neo-liberal, scientis-
tic jiggery-pokery which is rapidly falling
apart. Economies are not machines.
Changes in one sector have knock-on con-
sequences elsewhere. The hedge-funds
equations which have kept the inflated
bubble of futures, options and derivatives
markets aloft are liquefying. The infa-
rous market - so-called 'natural rate of un-
employment', which enabled banks and
governments to calculate the necessary
unemployment 'costs' for a given level
of inflation, has fallen into disrepute.
The Bank of England itself says that 'it cannot
be directly measured and changes over
time'. The Federal Reserve long ago sacri-
ficed it on the altar of jobs and growth.

O
n the domestic front, the policy
repertoire seems at first sight
more diverse, but has tended to
follow the same tendenial
groove. The main emphasis has been
thrown on to the supply side of the
equation. There have been many commendable
social-democratic interventions. But its key
watchwords - 'Education' and 'Training
Training and Education' - are driven, in
the last analysis, less by a commitment to
opportunities for all in a more egalitarian
society, and more in terms of supplying
flexibility to the labour market and re-edu-
cating people to 'get on their bikes' when
their jobs disappear as a result of some un-
predictable glitch in the global market.
New Labour does not and cannot have
much of an industrial economic policy. But
it can and does expend enormous moral
energy seeking to change 'the culture' and
produce new kinds of subjects, killed out
and defended against the cold winds that
blow in from the global marketplace.

To this source also we must trace the
remoralisation of the work ethic, and the
restoration of that discredited
Victorian utilitarian distinction between
'the deserving' and 'the undeserving' poor.
The New Deal subsidies training and Mr
Blunkett attacks class sizes and expands
nursery places for lone parents willing to
seek employment - very commendable,
and about time too. New Labour will not,
however, intervene to ensure that there are
jobs, though its entire welfare reforms are
riveted to work and paid employment.
Since it must depend on the private sector
to provide them, it can only morally exhort.
Hence the paradox of Jack Straw holding
parents exclusively responsible for their
children’s welfare. Its meaning in New Work-
to-Work insists that anyone who can move
and wants to draw a benefit must leave
their children, get up off their sick beds,
overcome their disable, come back out of
retirement and work. Not since the work-
house has labour been so fervently and
single-mindedly valorised.

Social inequality, broadly defined, is one of
the critical defining issues of national
politics and a crucial test of the distinction
between the Blair project and market
fundamentalism. According to Giddens,
in his book The Third Way: 'The gap between
the highest paid and the lowest paid work-
ers is greater than it has been for the last 50
years' and while 'the majority of workers
are better off in real terms than 20 years
ago, the the poorest 10 per cent have seen
their real incomes decline.' This is no ab-
eration. It follows a period of the most inten-
sive marketisation. It is what markets do
- the kind of Will Hutton, 40/30/30 soci-
etic thresholds - are naturally produced
when left to themselves. What's more,
the nature of poverty has changed, becoming
more diverse, while its causes have multi-
plied. The term 'social exclusion' draws
attention to these differences, and under-
lines the fact that income and economic
factors are by no means the only reason dif-
ferent groups find themselves excluded
from the mainstream of society. There is,
however, considerable evasiveness, both in
Giddens's argument and in New Labour's
appropriation of it, around the question of
how important the income/economic factor
in 'social exclusion' is and what to do about it.
Giddens bald statement that 'exclusion
is not about gradations of inequality' looks
like a sentence in search of a 'not only' that
went missing.

These issues are at the heart of New Labour's
profound ambiguity and duplicity around
welfare reform. After months of a
Great Debate, and a disastrous and abort-
ed effort to begin to put 'it' into effect, we
are still really none the wiser about what
Mr Blair really thinks or proposes to do
about welfare. We do not know whether he
proposes to transform the welfare state to
meet its broader social purposes more
effectively, or intends to go down in histo-
ry as the politician with the 'courage' to
wind up the welfare state as the basis of the
social settlement between the 'haves' and
'have-nots' which has kept twentieth
century capitalist societies relatively stable
and free of social violence. 'Reform' is the
weasel-word, the floating signifier, which
masks this gaping absence.

He says welfare is not reaching those
who are most in need. True: but it does not
follow that 'targetting', as such, is the cor-
rect overall strategy. He says Britain, in a
global economic context, cannot financial-
lly sustain it. But he does not make anything
of the fact that the UK is about fifteenth in
the world league table of social security
spending. He treats the present level of
wealth distribution as a Natural Law rather
than a political outcome. He believes wel-
fare is bad for us, corrupting our morals
and since the individual is not. But the
actual level of fraud is one of the most con-
tested social statistics, and the Fraud Office
systematically fails to produce the missing
millions. There is as much evidence that
the really poor, of whatever kind, can't live
by crime as there is for the proposition that
millions of people are making a 'lifestyle
choice' to live homeless on benefit in per-
petuity. He promises the poor not social
justice (that is a bridge too far) but 'social
fairness'. But his actual image of the citizen
is of the lonely individual, 'set free' of the
state to face the hazards of the global
weather alone. "The centre-left may have lost
the battle of ideas in the 1980s, but we are
winning now. And Blair: 'The centre-left may have lost the battle of ideas in the 1980s, but we are winning now. And
we won a bigger battle today: the battle of values.’ (Blackpool, 29.9.1998)
ledly suburban, anti-city, family-centred, devoted to self-reliance and respectability. Its cultural icons, he argues, are 'Neighbourhood Watch, Gordon's Gin, Enid Blyton, Ford Mondeo, Hyacinth Bucket, The Antiques Roadshow, Nescafe Gold Blend, Acacia Avenue, Scouts and Brownies, Nigel Kennedy and the Salvation Army.' Its voice is the Daily Mail.

Since the election, we have heard less of 'Middle England' and more of 'The People'. This is the great body of unknowns, the Essex Lads, the 'Babes', hommes elfes or 'moyen sensuelle'. 'The People', Jonathan Freedland argues, are the imagined subject of phrases like the 'People's priorities', the 'People's Princess'. The People are definitely not the 'working classes' or the 'under-classes' or the 'chattering classes' or manual workers or lone parents or black families or trade unionists or public sector workers, or Labour Party rank-and-file members, come to that. Their desires must be flattered: 'wooded' rather than 'represented'. They are spoken to rather than speaking. When not watching GMTV or Sky Sport, they are to be found in focus groups. The People, Nick Sparrow remarks, 'are those who matter once every five years'. Their voice is The Sun.

Then there are The Businessmen. The longer New Labour governs, the more it cosies up to Business, reinventing itself in the full-dress corporate disguise. Mr Blair is constantly to be seen in their company. Visually, he is exclusively associated with Success, a dedicated follower of celebrity, which is the modern form of the success story. He looks decidedly uncomfortable in the company of the poor. No doubt a Labour government needs support from the business community. But New Labour's relentless wooing of the new business nouveau riches is nothing short of abject.

In an ill-advised attempt to appropriate the project of renewal thus remains rough-edged of the Left reinventing a genuinely modern of the changes which now characterise our world. But, politically, he is essentially a post-Thatcherite figure, in the sense that the experience of Thatcherism was, it seems, his shaping and formative political experience.

So, try as he may to find an alternative ground on which to stand, he finds the imperatives of a soft Christian humanism more compelling: its cadences come to him more naturally than those of the centre-left. He is an able and clever politician and has become a clever, even to some a charismatric, leader. Just now he is basking in the power a landslide majority has conferred on him. And, far from betraying his principles, he seems totally and honestly persuaded that what he is doing is right. He has and will continue to make many important adjustments to the legacy he inherited. There is also a genuine humanity which one would have been wise to put any money on in Mrs Thatcher. They are similar figures, but they are not the same.

However, the difficult truth seems to be that the Blair project, in its overall analysis and key assumptions, is still essentially framed by and moving on terrain defined by Thatcherism. Mrs Thatcher had a project. Blair's historic project is adjusting Us to It. That touches half- the modernising part - of the task, as Marxism Today argued it.

But the other, more difficult, half- that of the Left reinventing a genuinely modern response to the crisis of our times - has been largely abandoned. At the global and domestic levels, the broad parameters of the 'turn' which Thatcherism made have not been radically modified or reversed. The project of renewal thus remains roughly where it did when Marxism Today published its final issue. Mr Blair seems to have learned some of the words. But, sadly, he has forgotten the music.
Nowhere Show Tony Blair has talked much about 'the project'. But what precisely is it? Stripped of the hyperbole, the continuities with Thatcherism are all too obvious. Stuart Hall examines a great missed opportunity W hat is the political charac- ter of the Blair regime? Is New Labour a radically new response to the core political issues of our time? Is its perspec- tive as broad in sweep, modern in outlook and coherent as Thatcherism's neo-liberal project, only different - because it is break- ing decisively with the legacy and logic of the Thatcher years? Or is it a series of â€œThe great moving nowhere showâ€œ, published in 1998, argued that the Blair project was still â€œessentially framed by and moving on terrain defined by Thatcherismâ€œ. As Michael Rustin notes in his afterword here, Hall regarded the 1997 election victory for Labour as a huge missed opportunity, and was profoundly critical of the intellectual underpinning of the Blair project, especially its notion of the â€œThird Wayâ€œ, which he saw as â€œhot on the responsibilities of individualsâ€œ, while â€œthose of business are passed over with a slippery evasivenessâ€œ. Pages and â€œHere! Lemme show you.â€œ Taking our scepticism for granted, he rushed to the bookcases and returned with Volume One of the â€œStoddard Lectures.â€œ â€œSee!â€œ he cried triumphantly.Â There was dancing now on the canvas in the garden; old men pushing young girls backward in eternal graceless circles, superior couples holding each other tortuously, fashionably, and keeping in the cornersâ€œ and a great number of single girls dancing individualistically or relieving the orchestra for a moment of the burden of the banjo or the traps.