



Leaving for a moment the development of the protected cruiser and its latest phase, it will be of interest to note how the torpedo-boat destroyer has progressed. The following table has been prepared to show the increase in displacement, and is based on the figures given in 'Brassey's Annual.' The date is the year of launch.

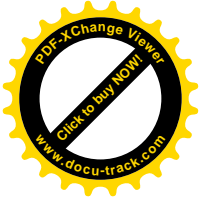
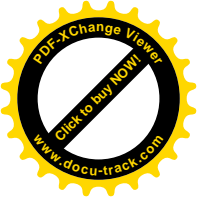
TABLE V. DESTROYERS.

Period.	Number.	Aggregate displacement.	Average displacement.
1893-97	75	21,382	285
1898-02	34	10,830	319
1902-07	41	25,327	618

The yearly table shows that since 1903 the average displacement has increased fairly steadily; but the latest vessel of the class, the *Swift*, is a great advance on the *Amazon* and *Saracen*, the 1907 boats. A jump is made from 790 to 1800 tons in displacement, and from 33 to 36 knots in speed. It may be argued, and very justly, that the *Swift* is an experimental vessel; but the policy of the last five years, the policy of destroyers increasing through averages of 440, 550, 593, and 600 tons to 790, was bound to produce her sooner or later, just as the cruiser policy was bound to produce the *Adventure*. Nevertheless, when the destroyer has attained a displacement more than half of that of contemporary cruisers, it is quite time to look about and see where it is all going to end.

It is the product of an inexplicable craving after exaggeration. We have the 21,000-ton battleship, the 17,000-ton cruiser, the all-big-gun armament, the 25-knot ironclad, and concentration carried to inexcusable extremes. The 1800-ton destroyer is another product of the craze, which, for its better scope, is striving to eliminate the protected cruiser at one end by substituting for it the *Minotaur* and the *Inflexible*; and it is driving its decimated remains at the other end into the arms of the exaggerated destroyer in order to reduce what its votaries are pleased to call "weak little ships" to the absolute and insane minimum. Let us prepare ourselves for the announcement that the advent of the *Swift* renders all earlier destroyers obsolete; for she is a greater advance on the *River* destroyers than the *Dreadnought* is on the *Majestic*—300 per cent. greater displacement and 41 per cent. higher speed.

But if the *Swift* is an essential product of the exaggeration mania, she is not likely, if repeated, to make for its permanence. In the first place, her displacement should give her good sea-keeping powers, and the menace to sea-going fleets will be enormously increased. A natural desire to avoid the danger will



result in the greater distribution of risks. Further, the all-big-gun battleship, represented by the *Dreadnought*, has no efficient means for dealing with a destroyer of such dimensions. It is a fact that the Power with the fullest and most recent war experience considers the 12-pounder too feeble for dealing with even the average (400 ton) destroyer, and is mounting 6-inch or 4.7 weapons for the purpose in her newest ships. It is, then, clear that the 12-pounder will be no match for the vessels of the *Swift* type, or even for the *Amazons* and *Afridis*; and since the 12-inch is, of course, out of the question, some intermediate weapon will be essential. It is rumoured that the "improved *Dreadnoughts*" now building, the *Temeraire*, *Bellerophon*, and *Superb*, will mount this intermediary, though in what shape, and whether the main armament will suffer in consequence, remain to be seen.

The upward tendency in the destroyer and the downward in the cruiser have brought the two classes within 1200 tons of each other, and a "new" class of ship, the "scout," has been introduced between them, combining the size of the 1904 cruiser with the speed of the 1904 destroyer. The scout stands in relation to fast small craft where the armoured cruiser stood in 1902 with regard to the heavier ships; and the armoured cruiser was the death-knell of the *Diadems* and *Dianas*.

Unconsciously, no doubt, but none the less certainly, the scouts and the *Swift*—there is but a step between them—represent an effort on the part of the craze for exaggeration to rid the navy of the 300-400 ton destroyer. To a public enamoured of sensation and dramatic effect the idea may appeal, more especially if it be disguised in the statement that the *Swift* is equal to any number of earlier craft, which are, therefore, in the logic of the exaggerationists, of no further use. But calmer minds will foresee the inevitable working of the cycle. The destroyer-scout, should it be successful, will necessitate the reinstatement of the secondary armament and the distribution of power; the secondary armament will reduce the size of the destroyer; and we shall be back once more in the saner, if more prosaic and mediocre, paths of all-round war fitness.

Lest the writer should be charged with inconsistency in condemning the 1800-ton destroyer *per se* while denouncing that course where the armoured cruiser is concerned, it may here be pointed out that while the latter class of vessel has progressed side by side with its co-type, the battleship, the destroyer has grown proportionately to nothing. Its latest development is, like the 14,000-ton protected cruiser, a freak.

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