

S.S. Espagne

Saturday, June 16th



This afternoon as I was sitting on the deck reading some people by the rail pointed out something. I looked up to see the 'ship' and the person next me (Mlle. ) said it is not a boat it is a peice of wreckage - it looks just like a periscope, I looked but could not see it though most of the people on the deck were looking at it. Just then I heard an explosion; although it was not a heavy noise I thought it was a torpedd. I went down to the cabine and go out the life preservers and we (Miss Ely had come down from the writing room) went up on deck. There we could still see the periscope and heard the second and third shots fired by the rear gun. I do not think the gun in front was shot off at all. We were taking a zigzag course to avoid the aim, and We were al standing by the rail watchjng and most people thought that the second one hit, they saw difrent the explosion, they say; at any rate it disappeared. We continued our crooked course for a few minutes and then everything went on as usual, though it was nearly half past four before the groups about the deck dispersed.

It was probably more than five minutes that the thing was in sight. The front gun was not fired (?) and no gun was fired till almost every one had remarked it. There was no panic, some people were almost indifferent but most took a sensible, prepared attitude. Some said that it was practise, a very foolish thing to say as there was no doubt about it either in our minds, those of us who were on deck nor in the minds of those who were in command.

As far as we know no torpedo was fired. We can not tell why. Perhaps it was too far away. The sea was quite smooth.

Soon after we had had our tea and settled down more or less peaceably, Miss Ely and I talking to some of the men, there was a loud report and every one dashed for their life belts. There was some excitement for about a minute and we saw a second shot fired and hit the object which rose in the air slightly and sank. In side of three minutes we knew that it was a floating peice of wreckage or a barrel but most of us thought it was the real thing at first. It was quite close to the boat. It was not as exciting as the first time of course but was sufficiently disconcerting.

The boats are now swung out but not lowered. I guess the men are keeping a good watch in the crow's nest. There is a gun in front and one behind which I suppose are always ready though I can not see the men.

The captain admits that the first was a submarine and supposes that it was side on and instead of front on and could not turn in the short time before it had drifted astern. It was probably almost half a mile away.