

## AMERICAN GIRL'S FIGHT TO GET HOME FROM EUROPE—SHE FINALLY REACHES HAVRE

### CHAPTER IV.—ALL GONE TO THE WAR

By Louise Townsend Nicholl

"C'est fini," she whispered, and went out of the room, lest I should see her cry. I learned afterward that her husband, her three brothers, and her husband's brothers had all gone. And after that, under all the shouting of the mobs, under all the fragments of the national hymn which every one was singing, under all the laughter of the little children who did not understand, I heard that woman's whispered words, "C'est fini."

The next day was Tuesday, and my boat was to leave Southampton on Wednesday at noon. Things happened fast. No planning, no decisions, could include the happenings of that day, and it seemed blind luck, or else a something which is indescribable and asks only faith, which sent me to the station with my bags that morning and found me at two the next morning on the last boat to cross the channel—at any rate for a few days. Up to this time we had believed that there were no boats crossing the Channel.

Tuesday morning began by our standing in line at the District Police Court, to get our passports signed. Word came along the line that without identification from the hotel in which we were living no police signatures would be given. And it was just here that the indescribable something which we call Blind Luck made its first appearance.

If we had not just then gone back to our hotel for an identification card, we would have missed a telephone call from another American woman saying that she knew that the Channel boats were running, and that we must pack our bags and go directly to the Saint Lazare station, where we could try to get a ticket. We packed our bags and went. As I could carry only two bags, I left one

behind, packing its contents into the corners of the other two.

The first thing that happened was that a party of five with six tickets to Dieppe offered me the extra one for the next morning, if I wanted to risk the possibility of the boats not running from Dieppe to Newhaven.

The party, like all the strange combinations of those days, consisted of a man and his wife and a little child, and two college boys who had annexed themselves. I agreed to go with them, and being thus provided for, guarded the luggage while my friend and the other American woman who had telephoned us, went out to join the line in the street.

This line was run on the same basis as the line at the embassy. After getting a number in one line, one came back in a day or two for a railroad ticket. But Blind Luck caused a woman to decide not to use her two tickets to Havre, and to ask my friend and the other woman if they wanted them.

The rumor was strong that no boats left Havre. My friend did not dare risk it, and so did not take the ticket. I dared, for I was trying to catch the Philadelphia. So I gave her my Dieppe ticket and took the one to Havre myself.

After saying good-bye to my friend, I was left alone. Grim determination took me, and I began to work. La France was to sail from Havre the next morning, and I went to the French Steamship Line to try to change my Philadelphia ticket for a La France ticket. It was then 1:30 p. m., and the train to Havre left at 3:30.

The French Line clerk looked at me in amazement. "There are no places left on La France," he said, "but there are on the Chicago, which sails Saturday. Go at once to the American Line. If they say your ticket is good exchange, it is."