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WHEN THE FIREMEN RETURN.

GRACE DUFFIE BOYLAN.

When the fire engine plunges down the street with clang and clash;
When the wild, red-nostriled horses leap like lions 'neath the lash;
When the lads have clambered nimbly to the rocking wagon's top,
If you're looking out for heroes, you have found the place to stop,
And you'll breathe a quick, "God save them!" for you'll know some heart
 may yearn
For a voice that may be silent when the firemen return.

We are used to deeds of daring, for our fighting men are bold,
And our babes are taught of glory ere the alphabet is told.
We have seen the brows of martyrs wreathed in battle smoke and flame,
While our sword, a blade anointed, struck its blow in freedom's name.
But more thrilling tales are never told of conflicts fierce and stern
Than are whispered 'round the stables when the firemen return.

With no sound of martial music, such as hearts of stone must feel;
With no subtle, frenzy-making, solemn rolling drum's appeal
They go forth to do their duty, taking ev'ry fearful odd,
And from charred and blackened bodies hero souls mount up to God.
And I cry to you: "Salute them!" give the cheer and praise they earn,
For the bravest brave are coming, when the firemen return.