



# The Song of the Printer

by Thomas MacKellar

*P*ick and click  
Goes the type in the stick,  
As the printer stands at his case;  
His eyes glance quick, and his fingers pick  
The type at a rapid pace;  
And one by one as the letters go,  
Words are piled up steady and slow—  
Steady and slow,  
But still they grow.  
And words of fire they soon will glow;  
Wonderful words that without a sound  
Traverse the earth to its utmost bound;  
Words that shall make  
The tyrant quake,  
And the fetters of the oppressed shall break,  
Words that can crumble an army's might,  
Or treble its strength in a righteous fight,  
Yet the type they look but leaden and dumb,  
As he puts them in place with finger and thumb;

But the printer smiles,  
And his work bequiles  
By chanting a song as the letters he piles,  
With pick and click,  
Like the world's chronometer, tick! tick! tick!

*O*, where is the man with such simple tools  
Can govern the world as I?  
With a printing press, an iron stick,  
And a little leaden die,  
With paper of white, and ink of black,  
I support the Right, and the Wrong attack.

*S*ay, where is he, or who may he be,  
That can rival the printer's power?  
To no monarchs that live the wall doth he give,—  
Their sway lasts only an hour;  
While the printer still grows, and God only knows  
When his might shall cease to tower.

According to [Hymnary.org](http://Hymnary.org), Thomas MacKellar was born in New York in 1812 and entered the printing establishment of Harper Brothers at the age of 14. In 1833, he moved to Philadelphia and joined the type-foundry firm of Johnson & Smith as proof reader. He subsequently became a foreman, and then a partner in that firm, which had been known from 1860 as MacKellar, Smiths & Jordan, type-founders of Philadelphia. This poem, written by Thomas MacKellar, first appeared in his 1866 publication, *The American Printer*.

Contact us to discuss how Wordsmith Associates might advance your communication priorities.

**Rod Mebane**, Managing Editor

RMEBANE@WORDSMITH.ASSOCIATES

**312-343-2235**

[HTTPS://WORDSMITH.ASSOCIATES](https://wordsmith.associates)