

Alfred, Lord Tennyson, Queen Victoria's poet laureate, saw Arthur as the ideal Englishman, an inspiration to readers in any age. In **The Idylls of the King**, the poet presented him as an incarnation of the particular ideals which appealed most strongly to the Victorian, an analogy from which readers may draw parallels for their own time. Tennyson stressed virtues which seemed to him excellent — idealism, chivalry, unselfish patriotism, religious faith — and showed that even the finest and greatest ideals often go down in defeat, as Arthur's did.

And slowly answer'd Arthur from the barge:
'The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
And God fulfils himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.
Comfort thyself: what comfort is in me?
I have lived my life, and that which I have done
May He within Himself make pure! but thou,
If thou shouldst never see my face again,
Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of ...'

