

Theodore Lawrence to Col. McMahon

A.A. No. 443

21393-4

Bristol 7th May 1814

Sir

I must beg leave to apologize to you for the liberty I take in requesting you (being a stranger) to do me the honor of laying the enclosed before his Royal Highness the Prince Regent.

I feel myself highly interested as an Englishman in the honor intended by the approaching visit of our most noble & illustrious allies the Emperor of Russia, the Emperor of Germany, the King of Prussia & others - A visit flattering to the Kingdom at large & to his Royal Highness the Regent in particular, unparalleled in the page of History, & which (with the other great Events in which they have borne so distinguished a part) tends to gild the setting Sun of our beloved & aged Sovereign & the rising of that of his Son with unexampled lustre -

As it will certainly be the desire of the Regent to afford these illustrious Strangers with every personal attention, so I have no doubt he will wish to give them every Specimen of our exalted national Situation in Arts, Arms, Architecture, & public benevolence
= and to

and to afford for that purpose every encouragement to any and every subject (however humble) who might wish to come forward on such an illustrious occasion to render his mite to the national glory -

Amongst the many improvements in Science I believe there have been none greater than in Mechanics & in ~~the~~ branch of it more than in that noble, highly useful & most extensively applied Machine the Steam Engine - This Engine has been so generally applied that its novelty has almost subsided, except in its application to inland (I have no doubt it may be also applied to marine) navigation -

The Steam Boat therefore I trust will not be deemed unworthy the notice of the Regent, nor thought by him a matter of small import to be introduced to his illustrious guests as an object not only of curiosity but real national utility -

About two years since I projected with another person (having heard of the Steam Boats in America where they are used with very great success) to build a Steam Boat at Bristol to ply between this place and Bath, which was effected & which now plies between these two cities -

This Boat the last Autumn I brought to London thro' the Kennet & Avon Canal & made use of it on the Thames for a short time, intending to have continued it as a passage Boat from London to Richmond, but finding that (by Act of Parliament respecting the River) I could not use it for profit without being a free Waterman I hastily

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returned, fearing the approach of winter might otherwise have completely prevented my return - I assure you that the Boat succeeded beyond my utmost expectation while on the River, it exceeded every thing in speed against wind, tide & stream, & would (I have no doubt) have been of great benefit to me & the neighbourhood could I have been suffered to retain the situation -

Since my return another Steam Boat has been nearly completed by my friend who projected the one before mentioned - This is infinitely superior in every respect to the former, & I have no doubt will go nearly double its speed, probably from 7 to 8 miles of hour - It is very neatly fitted up, with two cabins fore & aft capable of taking from 25 to 30 persons & the Engine is in the middle - The Cabins have every comfort & have in each 4 back windows, glass doors at the entrance, which may be all so opened as to make the cabins completely cool in the heat of Summer & protect from cold in the winter - The Boat has the appearance of a neat small Yacht & will (I have no doubt) against wind, tide, & stream outstrip any vessel on the River -

From the above description I should hope this self-impelling Boat (as it may be well called) would afford novelty to, & excite some interest in his Royal Highness & his noble Visitors, & with this view we beg to recommend it to his notice & patronage, & if considered worthy of them, his Royal Highness should so far honor it as to command its being brought to the Thames for his inspection & use -
= every,

additional exertion will be used to complete it immediately
& attend his order when & where to wait on him -

I trust you will yourself feel so much interest
in this Steam Boat, as not to consider your time mispent
in reading this long letter, & also to present the enclosed
to his Royal Highness for his inspection - If my address
to him should not be sufficiently explicit, perhaps the
additional explanation ^{from this letter} may not be unnecessary -

If my proposal be honor'd with approbation, a
early answer for the reasons above stated, will confer a great
obligation on

Sir Your most obed^t & able serv^t
Theodore Lawrence

(Decorative flourish)

T. Lawrence
of May

1814

address
Theodore Lawrence
att^r at Law
Barrister

To
The Rt. Honble John M'Mahon

MS. A. 10. 11. 11