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Arr. October 15th, 1865

Kingdom of the Netherlands
Province of Holland
Von Viapelle at Middelbourg
September 20, 1865

Mr George Engelmann M.D. at St. Louis.

Sir,

Allow a stranger, being a grower, admirer and amateur of the family of the Cacti, to address you. He would even like to appeal to your kindness and ask you for earnest requests.

For the past ten years I have busied myself in the cultivation of the Cacti, as a simple amateur. My thoughts in the summer are, that in the winter there are greenhouses in the country that are especially organized for the growth of that bizarre, difficult but most interesting family. I received a shipment of more than two thousand samples of more or less eight or nine hundred species. I am waiting to be enlightened by Prince Salm-Dyck. Of twenty species that he has established, I have all the specimens except a single one, the Discocactus colteolens [?]. I tried to obtain it in London through Mr Veilch; in Vienna through Mr ?Erfunt. It is possible that it no longer exists in Europe.

This winter I will be occupied in organizing a catalogue of my collection, at the insistence of my friends and other amateurs. It will give me great pleasure to supply you at the opportune time with one of the copies. I will frequently expose my work to an intelligent public. They will hear that the Pliscecia, the Pelecypteora, the Leuchtenbergia and the Astralonicum are the forebearers or the same family as the Mammillaria, Echinocactus, Cereus, Petroscilis, etc. There will be the time when I will be honored to have the good fortune of providing you a book with my experiences and my catalogue or small portions of my public conferences, so that you know what I am cultivating and the results I am getting.

Last year I was lucky to obtain your book about the Cactaceae: "Cactaceae of the Boundary", etc. I would like to benefit, by being in contact with a scholar who has made contributions in other books on the subject. I would like to ask you, hoping that I will not be too frank, being that I am an amateur and not a connoisseur, the way to obtain some seeds or cuttings of some new cacti, whichever you choose from your "Description of the Cactaceae" with John Bigelow and your "Cacti of the Boundary". My .friend the professor Miquel let me have your third small work for 8.00 .

If I really could obtain these seeds, there is no doubt that I could make them grow, after having been very successful with other seeds.


I want to reiterate in addition to all what I have said, that I am a dedicated botanist. But it is especially the cultivation of such a bizarre family because of its habitus and its divergent shapes like the Cactaceae, that excites me and sometimes gives me sorrow when I am not successful in classifying my different species. But I am abusing of your patience, of your time and of your leisure.

I can only reiterate my apologies for the liberty I have dared to take. I hope that you will excuse me.

I regret not having had the honor of meeting you during your trip to England and the Kew Gardens. Please do not refrain to ask me for any favor I can do for you here in Holland.

Finally, accept my respectful salutations.
De Jorge van Ellemeet
Senior member of the 1 rst Chambers of the General States.

