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Monsieur Dumas,

Greetings from Australia and happy birthday. I know we have at least two things in common: we are both related to famous people, and we both work in a family business.

I understand you are the sixth generation to work at Hermès, and under your leadership, it is flourishing - an impressive achievement.

My great-great-grandfather is the naturalist Charles Darwin. Late in life, he wrote, 'I have often and often regretted that I have not done more direct good for our fellow creatures.' Consequently, I also work in the family business, which focuses on nature conservation and animal welfare.

For many people, survival is a day-to-day struggle, but for you and me, who find ourselves in such fortunate positions, it is easier to consider the bigger picture.

I was surprised to learn that in response to a question from PETA at the recent Hermès shareholder meeting about the conditions in which wild animals are farmed for Hermès collections, you suggested that these farms are "preserving an ecosystem", "releasing crocodiles into the wild", and protecting "endangered" crocodilian species.

My understanding of Australia's crocodile conservation is that the decline of both Australia's crocodile species was stopped because hunting was widely banned.

A [distressing investigation](#) into Australian crocodile farms with ties to Hermès showed these magnificent animals are confined to concrete pens before being electrocuted, stabbed, shot, and mutilated with screwdrivers.

I appreciate that farmed crocodiles are few in number, compared to farmed fish, chickens and pigs, but their suffering is no less, and as our civilisation evolves towards a more compassionate future, cruel industries may struggle.

I suspect you, too, might be looking forward to a kinder world; ultimately, luxury only thrives in periods of stability. If so, I urge you to consider the opportunity for Hermès to expand into ethical luxury by using eco-friendly plant-based leathers for your accessories. Hermès doesn't have to be wedded to cruel materials that other companies shunned long ago. I would, of course, be happy to assist you with any initiatives in this direction.

In honour of your birthday, please find attached a copy of *On the Origin of Species*. I hope it inspires you to help Hermès lead humanity into the 21st century.

Love yourself, others and our planet,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chris Darwin". The signature is stylized, with "Chris" written in a cursive script and "Darwin" in a more formal, slightly slanted font.

Chris Darwin