

〈研究ノート〉

John Massinger, *The Secretary in Fashion* のレター例文について

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1. 序

1568年、William Fulwoodが初めての英文レターマニュアルである*The Enemy of Idleness*を世に出してから、16、17世紀と多くの英文マニュアルが発行された。それぞれのマニュアルは、それなりの優れた点や特徴を持っているが、内容的には非常に似通っていた。通信文の書き方についての“ハウツウ”ものという性格上、それは当然のことかもしれない。さらに、当時はまだ著作権という概念はなく、他の類似の本からの内容の瓢窃は別段不思議なことではなく、著者も罪の意識はなかったようである。特に17世紀半ばになると、マニュアル間の販売競争が激しくなり、自著の序文で、同種の書物を批判・非難、けなす著者も現れた。

このような激しい出版競争が行われ、それぞれの著者の間で競争（ライバル）心が生まれた17世紀半ば以降に、種々のマニュアルの中で頻繁に引用・模倣されるようになったのは、John Massingerの*The Secretary in Fashion*（1640）であった。確かに同書は、①レターの2大区分、②行間あるいはスペースによる尊敬の度合いの示し方、③レター本文の3つの構成（序論、論述、結論）など従来 of 書物には見られない非常に独創的な説明を含んでいた。

そこで本稿では、17世紀のベストセラーのひとつで、17世紀後半のマ

ニュアルの内容の主流になったと思われる同書のレターの書き方についての指示 (Instruction) とその指示に適したレター例文を紹介する。また、それに関連するレター例文の表現の特徴を明らかにしたい。

2. レター例文

2-1. 抗議のレター (Letters of Remonstrance)

本状は、自分より身分の低い者に対する場合や、相手の反応に気を使う必要のない場合には、それほど工夫 (invention) はいらない。相手の誤りとその原因を指摘し、その影響を説明したうえで、間違いの訂正を勧告するだけでよい。

モデルレター(1)

Another upon the same. (pp. 43-44)

SIR,

I understand that when you have nothing else to do, you take upon you to back-bite a person very near allyed unto me. 'Tis the worst trade and most dangerous that you can employ yourself in : but if your wine be the cause of these extravagancies, I advise you to mingle it with water as soon as you can, otherwise I shall be constrain'd to force you to such a long silence, that no man shall ever hear you speak hereafter. 'Tis the charitable advice, if you follow it,

Sir, of

Your servant, M.

上記のレターのように、冒頭から、相手の欠点（「陰口をたたく」）を指摘,

... you take upon you to back-bite a person

その行為は最悪であることを述べる。

'Tis the worst trade and most dangerous that

そして、その原因を指摘、

but if your wine be the cause of these extravagancies,

その改善策を示し、

I advise you to mingle it with water as soon as you can,

最後に、忠告である旨念を押している。

'Tis the charitable advice, if

しかし、親しい友人に対する場合は、相手を不快にさせない工夫 (art) が必要となる。まず、相手の誤りを指摘する前に、相手の好ましい点 (his Laudable qualities) をあげる。次に、「この世には完全なものはない (there is nothing perfect in the world)」といいながらも、せっかくの彼の長所も今回の愚行 (vices) によって損なわれることを説明する。そして、親友として、あるいは彼に対する愛情から、このような苦言を呈することを明らかにする。また同じような状況が当方のミスで発生したら、自分に対しても率直に意見を言ってほしい旨依頼する。最後に、今回の彼の誤りの原因は、彼の若さのせい、あるいは彼の悪い取り巻きのせいであると、相手の改心を期待し、いつでも許す用意のあることを言明する。

モデルレター(2)

Letters Reproaching a friend for the Coldness of his Affection.
(pp. 41-42)

SIR,

If I made not an extreme account of your friendship, I would not have complain'd of your silence, nor that coldness which you showed at our last meeting. I speak not this, because I would force your love : but I should be very glad you would acknowledge the affection which I have vowed you, whereby you might be obliged

to do me justice in honouring me with the like yet I leave you the liberty to do as you please, against my will, I say against my will, because I have taken oath, to live and die,

Sir,

your most humble servant, M.

上記のレターのように、まず最初に友情から苦言を呈することを言う。

If I make not an extreme account of your friendship, I would not have complain'd of your silence,....

そして、相手に対する愛情（忠誠）を強調し、

... you would acknowledge the affection which I have vowed you,

不本意ながらも忠告せざるを得ないことを明らかにする。

... I say against my will,....

2-2. 依頼のレター (Letters of Intreaty)

本状は、自分自身のため、あるいは自分の友人のために、他の人からの恩恵 (favour) や好意 (courtesie) を得ることを求めるためのものである。例えば、次のような第三者のための依頼状がある。

モデルレター(3)

Another upon the same. (p. 24)

SIR,

My vowed service and friendship, give me the freedom to implore your favour, in behalf of the bearer of these presents. I serve myself very boldly of the power you have given me to employ your indeavors in all sorts of encounters, but upon condition that

you will do the same in all occasions that may offer themselves,
wherein I may witness how I am,

Sir,

Your most humble servant, M.

モデルレター(4)

Letters to a friend in favour of another. (pp. 52-53)

SIR,

The bearer of this letter, a gentleman, and one of my very good friends, desiring that I would entreat you, (as I do humbly,) to oblige him in a business whose success depends wholly in your favour, I knew not how to refuse his merit and condition so poor a demand ; wherefore you shall oblige me extremely, if you will be pleased to employ some part of your credit therein without any consideration, but only that you were requested,

Sir,

by one of your most humble, and most obedient servant, M.

モデルレター(5)

Another. (p. 53)

SIR,

Your desert, and condition, have made you so considerable and necessary, that your friends are always subject to importune you : and amongst the rest I at this present, in favour of the gentleman who bears this letter beseeching you, to support him with your credit, in a business of which he will inform you. I shall account his obligations, into the number of mine, and testify to you in my own particular, the resentment which I shall conceive in quality,

Sir,

of your most humble and most obedient servant, M.

上記のレターに見られるように、

... to implore your favour, in behalf of the bearer (3)

The bearer of this Letter, ... desiring that I would intreat you,

... to oblige him in a business (4)

... I at this present, in favour of the gentleman who bears this letter beseeching you, to support him with your credit, (5)

と、レター持参人に代わって依頼することを明らかにしている。

依頼の方法には、直接的 (direct) ・明白な (plain) 依頼と、間接的 (indirect) ・副次的な (collaterally) 依頼とがある。

I) 直接的依頼

これは、いわゆる親しい友人に対する場合である。

モデルレター(6)

Another (p. 24)

SIR,

If you make as great account of my intreaty, as I do of your commands, you will easily accord unto me this, which is, to sustain with your authority, a business of mine now in agitation, that it may be determined to my advantage. I do not doubt of your power, and less of your nobleness, which forces me to believe that you will comply with this occasion offer'd you, to oblige extremely, Sir,

your most humble servant, M.

上記のレターのように、今までの愛情と友情から、こちらの要求に簡

単に応じてもらえることを確信し、

..., you will easily accord unto me this,

依頼する。そして、相手の好意に感謝の意を明らかにする。

I do not doubt of your power, and less of your nobleness,

II) 間接的依頼

これは、要求が容易にかなえられそうにない場合、あるいは相手の好意が得られそうにない場合で、主に婉曲的な方法 (insinuation) が取られる。

モデルレター(7)

Letters of Intreaty (p.23)

SIR,

The report of your generous disposition gives me the boldness, to implore your favour in the dispatch of a business, whose success depends absolutely on your authority. 'Tis true I have not the honour to be known by you, but that being a particular misfortune of mine, I desire it may not serve as a pretence to the refusal of my demand: Assuring you, that I shall endeavour to make known by real service, rather than name,

Sir,

Your most humble servant, M.

モデルレター(8)

Another (p. 25)

SIR,

If you complain of my importunity, accuse your own freeness, for if you had been less generous, I had been less bold. But being I know by experience in what a high degree civility and courtesy

predominate in you, I am constrain'd to think, that my intreaty will not be unacceptable, which is, that you would be pleased to mollify with your eloquence, that harsh conceipt that Master N. has of me. In this encounter you will oblige us both together, since giving him to understand my innocence, he will easily give place to reason. This favour in particular I hope from your goodness, as you on the contrary may expect all sorts of service from my duty : In quality,

Sir,

of your most humble servant, M.

モデルレター(9)

Another Answer (pp. 25-26)

SIR,

Though I be the most unprofitable of all your friends, yet I, shall never fail to prove my self one of the most passionate to your service. The violence whereof causes me at this present, to entreat you to oblige me in such, or such as encounter. All that I can say to you for the first acknowledgement is, that I shall conserve eternally the memory of this favour, and if I be not able to meet with an occasion to revenge myself, that I shall carry the sorrow of it into my grave, together with the quality

Sir of

Your most humble servant, M.

上記のレターのように、最初に、こちらの依頼の凶々しさを謝る。

... the boldness, to implore your favour (7)

..., I had been less bold. (8)

そして、相手の親切心や好意のお陰で、当方の要求を断られることはない并希望する。

I desire it may not serve as a pretence to the refusal of my demand: (7)

I am constrain'd to think, that my entreaty will not be in-acceptable, (8)

以前すでに何らかの恩恵を受けている場合には、これまで以上の恩返しをすることを明言する。

..., that I shall endeavour to make known by real service, rather than name, (7)

逆に、相手に以前何らかの恩恵を与えている場合には、その返礼を求めていると感じさせないように簡単なヒントを与える。

..., yet I shall never fail to prove myself one of the most passionate to your service. (9)

また、当方の依頼の正当さや容易さを示す。

緊急の依頼の場合には、ことの重大性をやや誇張したり、自分の困難な状況を救える唯一の友人であることを強調し、相手に同情させる工夫もする。

最後に、いつまでも彼の恩義を忘れないこと、

..., that I shall conserve eternally the memory of this favour, (9)

また近いうちに返礼の努力をすることを約束する。

..., as you on the contrary may expect all sorts of service from my duty: (8)

もし返礼できない場合には、いつまでも心の中に忘れずにとっておくと誓う。

..., that I shall carry the sorrow of it into my grave, (9)

2-3. 依頼レターに対する返事

本状は、相手の依頼に対して、肯定の場合と、否定の場合がある。

I) 肯定の場合

相手にとっては良い知らせなので、表現上それほど気を使う必要はない。

モデルレター(10)

Answers to the Letters of Intreaty (p. 26)

SIR,

I have done all that you desired of me, but with so much satisfaction, and so little pains, that I beseech you prepare some new commands, whereby the passion I have to serve you, may not be left unprofitable and you shall see by my observance, that I have no greater pleasure in the world, than to make myself remarked in all places,

Sir,

your most humble servant.

モデルレター(11)

Another Answer (pp. 26-27)

SIR,

I have many thanks to return you for the happy employment you gave me in your service; I think all things fell out according to your desire, which gave me ample occasion to rejoice, as participating in all things that concern your particular. I beseech you do me the favour, that I may never have occasion to doubt of it, since I profess myself as much as any man in the world,

Sir,

your most humble servant, M.

モデルレター(12)

Another Answer (p. 27)

SIR,

I could wish you had everyday occasion to command my service, that I might continually have the good fortune to produce new proofs of my obedience. I performed happily the last commands wherewith you were pleased to honour me, which gives me cause to believe that you will not long let me rest unprofitable, without giving me some other sort of employment, wherein I may find more satisfaction, as proving it more painful. This I beseech you to do, in quality

Sir of

your most humble servant, M.

モデルレター(13)

Another Answer (pp. 27-28)

SIR,

I find so much facility in the execution of the command, which you imposed upon me, that I am ashamed to reckon it in the number of services which I desire to render you: It being an encounter of so little importance, for my satisfaction and your interest, that I beseech you give me some other employment, wherein I may witness according to your merit and my affection how unfeignedly I am,

Sir,

Your most humble servant, M.

上記のレターからわかるように、冒頭から返事を明らかにする方法と、

I have done all that you desired of me, but (10)

I find so much facility in the execution of the command, which you imposed upon me, that (13)

前置きの後に結果を知らせる方法がある。

I have many thanks to return you for the happy employment ...; I think all things fell out according to your desire, which (11)

I performed happily the last commands wherewith you were pleased to honour me, which (12)

また、結びの表現として、結尾語と対になっているものが見られる。

This I beseech you to do, in quality

Sir of your most humble servant, M. (12)

..., wherein I may witness ... how unfeignedly I am,

Sir, Your most humble servant, M. (13)

II) 否定(不可・遅れ)の場合

本来なら相手の要求に応じられない返事のため、少々工夫が必要と思われる。

モデルレター(14)

Another Answer (p.27)

SIR,

I ask you pardon for the long time that I have spent in the executing your commands, nor that I have been negligent in employing my cares and diligence, but because the success consisting in a strangers power. I could no sooner give you the effects: yet let not the mishap of this delay, hinder you hereafter

in using my endeavours, since I am without reserve,

Sir,

your most humble servant.

モデルレター(15)

Another Answer (p. 28)

SIR,

When you desire any service of me, I beseech you consider whether it be in my power or no, to the end that being unable to execute your commands (as I am at this present) I incur not the hazard of your reproach. You may expect new proof (when you please) of the passion which I have to serve you, since I no way desire to bear in vain the quality,

Sir,

Of Your most humble servant, M.

モデルレター(16)

Other Answers of Excuse to the Letters of Intreaty (p. 29)

SIR,

I am more sorry than yourself, that I am not able to effect your commands: The duty which you expect, does not absolutely depend of me, so that to render it worthily, I am to implore the favour of another man, who professeth to incline totally to the adverse party. Do not think that I make these excuses to avoid the accusation, which presented itself for your services; but believe I beseech you, that in all other encounters, I will comport myself with so much passion, that you shall be forced to confess I am unfaignedly,

SIR,

your most humble servant, M.

モデルレター(17)

Another Answer (pp. 29-30)

SIR,

If you knew in what disorder my misfortune causes me to write, (since I am not able to satisfy your desire) you would have pity on my affliction, being it wholly proceeds from my grief, that the power to do you service is taken from me. I speak this from my heart and soul, and being the friendship I promised you taught me the language, I will constrain myself to believe, that it is eloquent enough to persuade you, that the only want of ability, deprives me at this present, of the honour and contentment, to witness unto you how much I am

SIR,

your most humble servant, M.

上記のレターからわかるように、冒頭で謝罪する方法と、

I ask you pardon for the long time that I have spent in the executing your commands, (14)

I am more sorry than yourself, that I am not able to effect your commands: (16)

自分の能力不足を言い訳しながら、相手の要求に応えられないことを明らかにする方法がある。

When you desire any service of me, I beseech you consider whether it be in my power or no, to the end that being unable to execute your commands (15)

If you knew in what disorder my misfortune causes me to write, (since I am not able to satisfy your desire) you would have pity on my affliction, (17)

しかし、次回の成功の期待で終える。

..., I will comport myself with so much passion, (16)

また、結びと結尾語の対表現が見られる。

..., since I am without reserve,

Sir, your most humble servant. (14)

... that you shall be forced to confess I am unfaignedly,

SIR, your most humble servant, M. (16)

..., to witness unto you how much I am

SIR, your most humble servant, M. (17)

2-4. 苦情のレター (Letters of Complaint)

本状は、非礼なことをした人に対して、彼の誤り (fault) を指摘したり、彼の恩知らずな態度 (ingratitude) をとがめるために書かれる。

I) 軽い、穏やかな不平の場合

この場合、相手への不平・不満だけでなく、相手の良いところを強調するほめ言葉を混在させ、相手の受ける印象を軽くする工夫が必要となる。そして、友人としての振る舞いが適切でないことを残念がる。その原因は、相手の悪意 (ill will) からではなく、周囲の人からそそのかされたり、誤解に基づくものであり、相手が自分の誤りに気づき、悔い改めれば、水に流すことを明らかにする。

モデルレター(18)

Another (pp. 10-11)

SIR,

If I did not honour you extremely, I could easily revenge myself of

your forgetfulness, by my silence; but the esteem which I make of your deserts, together with an inclination which carries me to your service, oblige me to assure you still, that though you should forget me, even to my name, I would never change the resolution which I have taken, to be all my life

SIR

your most humble servant, M.

上記のレターは、相手への不満を、

I could easily revenge myself of your forgetfulness,

相手を敬う気持ちと、

If I did not honour you extremely,

... the esteem which I make of your deserts,

うまく組み合わせ、受取人への配慮が見られる。

II) 重大な苦情の場合

この場合、かなり大きな損害を被ったために、強い調子で相手の非礼を責めることになる。

モデルレター(19)

Letters to complain of a long silence (pp. 8-9)

SIR,

The friendship and service which heretofore I vowed you, force me at this present, to demand the reason of your silence. I do not doubt but you alledge a sufficient excuse to authorize it, yet I beseech you think, that how lawful soever it be, I shall never leave off complaining: you may pretend the want of occasions, or the sudden accident of some sickness (which never molested you except in thought) whereby to justify yourself against my reproaches.

But all this is not able to satisfy me; confess your fault, ask forgiveness, and you go a nearer way to work, that's the only way to conserve eternally,

SIR

your very humble servant.

上記のレターのように、非常に強いトーンになる。まず、冒頭で、友情のためと述べる。

The friendship and service which ..., to demand the reason of your silence.

しかし、相手の態度に不信感を抱き、

I beseech you think, that how lawful soever it be, I shall never leave off complaining :

さらに、予想される相手の言い訳をあげ、

you may pretend the want of occasions, or the sudden accident of some sickness

いかなる理由も許さず、ただ謝りなさいと強い口調で相手に迫っている。

But all this is not able to satisfy me ; confesse your fault, ask forgiveness,

ただし、あまり誇張しすぎたり、相手を傷つけるような言葉で非難してはいけない。一般的には、以下のような表現が求められる。

モデルレター(20)

Another upon the same (p. 9)

SIR,

I shall break with you at last, if you break not silence, imagining that you love me but a little, since you have forget me altogether.

I beseech you deal more familiarly with me, if my friendship be any way considerable, or you esteem me worthy of yours. In the humour I am now, I think you can no sooner blot me out of your memory, than I can raze you out of my heart, without retaining any thing (by my good will) but the quality only

SIR

of

your most humble servant.

モデルレター(21)

Another Answer (p. 10)

SIR,

If you have taken an oath to write no more to me, at least send me the letters back again which I address to you, that I may still have the honour to receive something from your part. Silence is a sworn enemy of friendship, which is the reason that mine reproaches you at this present, being not able to endure, that after so many protestations never to forget me, you shall lose even the memory of having made them. You may change humour when you please, if you desire to renew the obligations

SIR

of

your most humble servant.

モデルレター(22)

Another (p. 11)

SIR,

I can endure no longer that you should forget a person who

honours you so extremely as I do. These three months of your silence I have kept my mind in the continual setters of grief, that I should lose the honour of your remembrance ; I beseech you do me justice, and let not all the world complain with me, of the little esteem you make

SIR

of

your most humble servant.

モデルレター(23)

Letters Complaining of the Absence of a Friend (pp. 54-55)

SIR,

Though true friendship be in the proof of absence, yet yours is of so long continuance that I imagine you purpose to cast me off since you seem to retire your affection thus by little by little. I speak confidently, because I fear extremely, and you ought to pardon this boldness and fear since they proceed equally from the good inclination I have to your service, and the great esteem I make of your friendship. Return then quickly, if you will free from sorrow and disquiet,

SIR,

The most humble of all your servants and the most faithful.

モデルレター(24)

Another (p. 55)

SIR,

I can endure your absence no longer : you must of necessity show yourself oftener than you do to your friend, for your own honour,

and my satisfaction : I say for your honour, because it is thereby in question, since you keep yourself so long retired in a place, of which even the gazette never makes mention. You must not give so much way to your humour and inclination, that they interest with them in the contentment, of all that love you. For my own part, I am resolved to go seek you, if you return not very soon, to which I adjure you, by all the charmes of the passion which I have to your service, as being

Sir,

your most humble servant, M.

上記のレターのように、冒頭で、相手の非礼を長い間我慢してきたことを述べる。

I can endure no longer that you should forget a person who
.... (22)

..., yet yours is of so long continuance that (23)

I can endure your absence no longer : (24)

また、お互いに気まずい思いをしたり、対立するよりもむしろ、いつかは、気付いてくれるのではと無視してきたが、これ以上の事態の悪化を恐れ、あえて苦言を呈することを示す。

I shall break with you at last, if you break not silence, (20)

Silence is a sworn enemy of friendship, which is the reason that mine reproaches you at this present, being not able to endure, (21)

I shall confidently, because I fear extremely, and you ought to pardon this boldness and fear since (23)

そして、こちらからの指摘に対し、相手があまり感情的にならず、冷静に事態を判断するように求める。

I think you can no sooner blot me out of your memory, than
I can raze you out of my heart, (20)

I beseech you do me justice, and let not all the world complain
with me, (22)

最後に、友人としての行動であることを強調し、相手の反省があれば、今回のことは許す旨言明する。

2-5. 言い訳のレター (Letters of Excuse)

本状は、不平・不満のレターや抗議のレターに対する返事である。この場合、相手の不平、抗議を否定する場合と、肯定する場合とに分けられる。

I) 否定する場合

この場合、相手の主張の間違いを正し、納得させなければならない。

モデルレター(25)

Another to the Letters of Complaint (p. 44)

SIR,

I do not write this letter to give you satisfaction, but to comply with my own humour, in the innocence I have always lived ; you are too blame to make those false reporters my judges, from whose sentence I appeal as from an abuse, yet you may believe what you please, being you are unwilling to explicate yourself any further. And if you be not satisfied with the assurance I give, that I never dream'd of offending you, I leave you to fair paper and ink, whereby you may signify unto me your minds, and intention, whether good or bad I care not. It sufficeth me that you call to remembrance the name and quality which I once bore

Sir,

Of your most humble servant, M.

モデルレター(26)

Letters to Justify ones self of a Reproach (pp. 45-46)

Sir,

I wonder greatly at the injustice you have done me, being otherwise so reasonable as you are : you have condemned me upon the first report of my enemies, without observing any other formality than what your passion suggested. I must tell you, you appear something too violent in this encounter, and the more because you never seem'd to make doubt of the passion I have to serve you ; I complain then with reason, because your reproaches are without reason, and beseech you take the pains hereafter to ponder the information, which shall be made you of a business so important as this, and particularly when it touches the interest,

SIR,

of your most humble servant, M.

モデルレター(27)

Letters to clear ourselves of a false report (pp. 57-58)

SIR,

I need not much eloquence to persuade my innocency touching the report which was made to you of late, since I will oblige myself to make them confess the truth publicly that have been too shameless to maintain the contrary in private. 'Tis a malice so ill contrived, (though black as hell) that I am persuaded it will deceive itself. For what appearance is there, that having received an infinity of favour from your goodness, I should so irreverently

contemn a thousand other noble qualities that elevate your esteem above the common? I beseech you believe that I shall be their admirers all my life, and a continual flail to the broachers of this imposture. I have no respect of persons when my honour is questioned; I bear a sword to defend it with the hazard of my life, which I esteem far less. But if this cannot give you satisfaction, let me know the name of the reporter, and I will make you sport in laying open the particulars of his knavery, and the sincerity of my innocency, which shall give you sufficient never to make doubt of the passion I have to serve you, as being Sir,

your most humble and most obedient servant.

上記のレターからわかるように、最初に、相手の主張の間違いを指摘、軽々しく信じないように願います。

I do not write this letter to give you satisfaction, but (25)

I wonder greatly at the injustice you have done me, (26)

I need not much eloquence to persuade my innocency touching the report which (27)

そして、このような状況では、単なる中傷 (calumnies) にすぎず、

you are too blame to make those false reporters my judges, from (25)

you have condemned me upon the first report of my enemies, without observing any other formality (26)

'Tis a malice so ill contrived, that I am persuaded it will deceive itself. (27)

自分の説明 (justification) を容易にわかってくれるように希望する。

And if you be not satisfied with the assurance I give, ..., I leave you to fair paper and ink, (25)

because your reproaches are without reason, and beseech you take the pains hereafter to ponder the information, (26)

But if this cannot give you satisfaction, ... and I will make you sport in laying open the particulars of his knavery, and the sincerity of my innocency, (27)

最後に、友人としての行動を尊重することを述べる。

II) 相手の主張が正しい場合

この場合は、相手の非難が事実で、言い訳しなければならない状況である。

モデルレター(28)

Another answer (p. 14)

SIR,

Your complaints and reproaches, are too agreeable to me, that I am forced to give you thanks, knowing they proceed from an access of affection, and zeal. 'Tis true I have been silent too long, but I pray you believe, that the misfortune which imposed it upon me, hath given me such a penance, that I deserve pardon, though it were the most enormous crime of the world. I will not now make a particular recital of all the accidents which have befallen me, for fear you should judge me as importune in that, as in the other you esteem'd me negligence: It sufficeth me to put you in mind, that I am always, what I always was,

Sir,

Your most humble servant.

モデルレター(29)

Another Answer (pp. 15-16)

SIR,

I would I were left handed, that I might acquit my self of the service I owe you, being unfortunately lame of the right hand : which has obliged me to take use of a strange pen, to excuse my silence, and to assure you, that though I serve myself of another mans endeavor in writing this Letter, yet 'tis my soul that conceived it, and my heart that gave the dictamen, being very glad to witness unto you the truth of my thoughts, touching the resolution which I have taken to make myself remarqued in all places

Sir

Your most humble servant.

モデルレター(30)

Answers to the Letters which complain of Absence (p. 56)

SIR,

You chide me with such a good grace, that I could wish to see you oftener in that humour, since it obliges me to believe that I am not altogether indifferent to you, 'Tis true, my absence hath been something long, but being my presence is unprofitable to my friends, by the disability I am into serve him, I make the less account of my absence from the court; yet the only means to occasion my return will be, if you testify unto me that I can be useful to you when I am there; which shall precipitate my haste, being in a firm resolution to render you all manner of service, in quality,

Sir,

of your most humble and obedient servant, M.

上記のレターからわかるように、冒頭で相手の言い分に同意する。

Your complaints and reproaches, are too agreeable to me, that

.... (28)

You chide me with such a good grace, that (30)

また、「あらゆる人は何らかの欠点を持っている」、そして「その欠点から逃れることは難しい」など自分の立場を正当化する。

..., but being my presence is unprofitable to my friends, by the disability I am (30)

あるいは長々と自分の言い訳をする方法もある。

..., being unfortunately lame of the right hand: ..., to excuse my silence, and (29)

また、これまでの友情関係から、今回のような無礼を許してくれることを念じ、相手を不快にする意図はなかったことを説明する。

モデルレター(31)

Another Answer (p. 13)

SIR,

It is not needful to excuse my silence, since I still endure the pain of it, by reason of a sickness, which molests me continually. But though your reproaches proceed from your affection, yet I assure you they interest mine extremely, being you doubt of the continuance of it. I beseech you think, that I am not of an humour to forget those whom I honour as I do you, and except I be again reduced to the extremity I was in before, I shall always acquit myself of that which I owe you, in quality

Sir

of

Your most humble servant.

上記のレターのように、理由を明らかにし、

I still endure the pain of it, by reason of a sickness,

相手の対応も認める。

... though your reproaches proceed from your affection,

もし、今回の相手が自分より上位の人、あるいはひどく怒っている人の場合には、「許しを乞う者はすべて許す」と神の例をあげ、相手の慈悲を懇願する。そして、このような温情ある処置は、相手の名声をさらに高め、またすべての人から愛される、と彼の憐れみを誘う。また、今後はもっと注意深く考え、将来の奉仕によって今回の愚行を補いたい、

..., being in a firm resolution to render you all manner of service, (30)

と後悔の気持ちを示す。

3. ま と め

John Massinger は、レターを実生活 (business) と社交 (compliment) に大きく分け、それらをさらに、前者は 10 種類、後者は 8 種類に分類している。その小分類に基づいて、それぞれのレターの書き方について細かい説明を行っている。

本稿では、いわゆる Letters of Business の範ちゅうに入るものの中から、同書の Instruction の説明に合ったものを 31 選んだ。

これらのモデルレターでは、仰々しい表現は影をひそめ、できるだけ用件を直さいつかつ具体的に書くことが求められており、一読して非常にわかりやすい。また、「友人同士」の通信を基本としているため、あらゆる状況で、親しい関係が強調されている。例えば、抗議したり、苦情を述べる場合には、相手の受ける強い (悪い) 印象を和らげるために友人 (friend) として、あるいは友情 (friendship) から、苦言を呈することを、依頼の場合は、相手の友人としての資質 [寛大さ (generous disposition), 無遠慮さ (freeness), 親切心 (courtesy)] に頼ることを、また言い訳する

場合も、友人としての愛情 (affection), 熱意 (zeal), 情熱 (passion), 関心 (interest) を持っていることの認識を, 明らかにしている。

逆に, 友人同士のため, 時には, 具体的な指摘 [ワインの飲み過ぎに言及 (“if your wine be the cause of these extravagancies,”) (1)], また強い口調 (トーン) [正直に自分の誤りを告白するように指示 (“confess your fault, ask forgiveness,”) (19)] も見られる。また友情を強調するあまり, 「恩義をいつまでも忘れない (“I shall conserve eternally the memory of this favour”)] (9), 「沈黙は友情の敵 (“Silence is a sworn enemy of friendship”)] (21)などの表現も見られる。

次に形式上の観点から, Salutation と, Complimentary close は,

SIR,

(本文)

Sir, Your most humble servant,

が定型 (決まり文句) となっている。また結びの言葉と結尾語の対表現,

I may witness how I am,

Sir, Your most humble servant, M. (3)

... you were requested,

Sir, by one of your most humble,

and most obedient servant, M. (4)

This I beseech you to do, in quality

Sir of your most humble servant, M. (12)

... that I am always, what I always was,

Sir, Your most humble servant. (28)

などが見られた。

以上の特徴から言えることは, 当時の人々が, 通信文 (レター) としての形式 (Salutation, Complimentary close) を守りながらも, その本文では, 用件を「なるべく簡潔に伝える」ように求められていたことである。