

RETROSPECTIONS OF AN ACTIVE LIFE

BY

JOHN BIGELOW

THE BAKER & TAYLOR COMPANY - 1909.

PRESIDENT LINCOLN'S SECOND MINISTER

TO FRANCE

Volume II - Page 547-48

I had occasion, some three years ago, to warn Mr. Seward of plots maturing then against the lives of leading loyal statesmen in different cities of our republic, intelligence of which had reached me here. His reply has acquired, from recent events, such a painful interest that I feel justified by the present occasion in reading it to you:

Department of State,
Washington, July 15, 1862

"There is no doubt that from a period anterior to the breaking out of the insurrection, plots and conspiracies for purposes of assassination have been frequently formed and organized. And it is not unlikely that such an one as has been reported to you is now in agitation among the insurgents. If it be so, it need furnish no ground for anxiety. Assassination is not an American practice or habit, and one so vicious and so desperate cannot be engrafted into our political system.

This conviction of mine has steadily gained strength since the Civil War began. Every day's experience confirms it. The President, during the heated season, occupies a country house near the Soldier's Home, two or three miles from the city. He goes to and from that place on horseback, night and morning, unguarded. I go there unattended at all hours, by daylight and moonlight, by starlight and without any light."