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**AN UNDISCOVERED
CRIME."**

To the Editor of the SUNDAY TIMES.

Sir,—In regard to Mr. de Lasso's letter on "An Undiscovered Crime," I should like to point out that it is not certain that Sir Edmund Berry Godfrey was murdered: he may have committed suicide. The evidence for this view was collected some years after the event by Sir Roger L'Estrange, and is tendentious and unsatisfactory; it was used by Mr. A. Marks in his "Who Killed Sir Edmund Berry Godfrey?" but is now generally rejected. Assuming that he was murdered, Oates's complicity is purely conjectural (it is used by Mr. John Buchan in "The Path of the King"); so is the Duke of York's; neither is probable. The view that Godfrey had discovered anything important about putative treasonable activities of the Catholics is put forward by the Hon. John Pollock in "The Papish Plot," but is open

to question; he was, however, a friend of Edward Coleman, who had undoubtedly carried on a treasonable correspondence with Catholics abroad; this does not seem to be an adequate reason for the Catholics to murder him. Until new evidence turns up the whole business must remain a mystery.

As for the "plot" itself: At St. Omer Oates learnt that there had been a meeting of the English Jesuits on April 24, 1678; and he probably heard some gossip about the hopes of the Catholics for their progress in England. But except for the date of the meeting all the details of his story were false. The meeting was the regular triennial "consult" (I think that is the right term) of the English province. Neither the Jesuits nor the Duke of York were concerned in any "plot" in Oates's meaning of the word; but the duke in allowing the meeting to take place in St. James's Palace (his residence) was an accomplice with them in a breach of the penal laws.

Oxford.

E. S. de BEER.