

ETHNOLOGY AND ARCHEOLOGY.

PERUVIAN GOLDEN SHROUD.

In a recent communication to the *National Intelligencer*, a correspondent, Mr. Thomas Ewbank, gives some important information in regard to the discoveries made in Peruvian tombs and tumuli derived from W. W. Evans, Esq., a gentleman of strong antiquarian predilections, and now engineer of the Arica and Taena Railroad, in Peru. Mr. Evans states, that in making excavations for the railroad at Arica, hundreds of graves are demolished in all directions, in which are numerous Indian relics. The excavations are seventy feet deep, and as the soil is loose sand, as the work proceeds, every thing from the top comes sliding down—dead Indians, pots, kettles, arrow-heads, &c. Among other interesting mortuary relics, an Indian was started out of his resting place, rolled up in a shroud of gold. Before Mr. Evans had knowledge of the incident, the workmen had cut up this magnificent winding-sheet and divided it among themselves. With some difficulty Mr. Evans obtained a fragment and dispatched it to Mr. Ewbank. Mr. Evans notices a remarkable fact, that in hundreds of Indians' skulls which he has examined, not one has contained a decayed tooth. Mr. Ewbank thinks the weight of the entire shroud must have been eight or nine pounds, and, had it been preserved, it would have been the finest specimen of sheet gold that we have heard of since the times of the Spanish conquest. In some remarks upon the preservation of souvenirs of the departed, Mr. Ewbank observes: it is the form of features, and not the body, of the dead, that should be preserved. The mummies of Egypt are quarried for fuel, and, whether their wives, their priests, or their slaves, they are split open, and chopped up with the same indifference as so many pine logs. The gums and balsams used in embalming them have made them a good substitute for bituminous coal; and thus the very means employed to preserve them have become the active agents of their dissipation. So it is when the materials of coffins have a high market value, they are then seized as concealed treasure, and their contents cast out as rubbish. Like heroes in the Eastern hemisphere, the descendants of Manco Capac were sometimes, if not always, entombed in such, and with considerable treasure besides, in vessels of gold and silver; hence we learn how the Spanish conquerors sought for, often found, and as often plundered rich Indian sepulchres.

GREEK SLAVE OF THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY.

At a recent meeting of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, Mr. Joseph Robertson communicated a notice of a Letter of Safe Conduct and Recommendation granted by James II., King of Scots, to Nicholas Georgiades, a Greek of Arcosson, travelling through Scotland to collect the alms of the Faithful for the ransom of his brother, taken prisoner by the Turks at the capture of Constantinople in 1453.

This document afforded a casual illustration of the feelings which the fall of the capital of the Roman Empire in the East excited even in the farthest frontiers of Western Europe. Six years after that memorable event, a Greek who had lost his all in the siege, and left a brother captive in the hands of the Mahometan conquerors, made his way, maimed of a limb, to the Scottish shore. He bore a letter from the Cardinal of Jerusalem, and on the faith of this, and moved by the wanderer's story as heard from his own lips, the Scottish King, James II., issued a letter under the great seal, taking the goods, person, and servants of the exile under his