This high fertile valley has always attracted peo-ple — the native Indians who farmed it for thou-sands of years, the Incas who invaded it, the Span-ish who coloined it, the modern businessmen who work in the capital city of Quito and the tourists, like me, who come to gape at it. All it is all it is like me, who come to gape at it. All it is all it is below, which leads down the green valley to Amba-ta, Riobamba and Cuenca, but first I must discover Quito.

AS WE APPROACH Quito, the clouds take on the creamy conical shapes of mountains. The high peaks of the Andes are wearing the clouds like a

peaks of the Andes are wearing the clouds like a whipped cream topping and the clouds like a whipped cream topping wear to clouds, and a rugged mountain slope leads down in rocky ridges to the rooftogs of Quito, nestled high at the end of a magnificent, vivid-green valley.

Cultivated green lieds make rectangular shapes high up to a dark green line of trees. We are hovering exactly adverse the quatter, so vegatation grown almost to the top of the mountains.

Through the mist, houses clinical grown almost to the top of a conceal hill crowned with a huge aluminum status of the Virgin of Quito. A high-rise city, and a speased of the Quito of Quito. A high-rise city, and a speased of the Quito of the conceal to the conce

cily. Contemporary cars, most of them small, fill the parking lot of the airport and crowd the roads.

PATRICIO Valencia, administrative director of the Ecuador National Tourism Commission, gives a quick rundown of facts from the microphone at the front of the bus, Guito is 9,300 feet high, and has a population of 800,000. Ecuador has 22 volcanic peaks with an average altitude of 18,000 feet. The agricultural economy is now also an oil economy. Ecuador has the highest oil pipeline in the world. I'm listening, Patricio, and your English is better han mine; but I cannot keep my eyes off the scene that we are driving through. Boundabouts full of flowers. A pigitaled man in a dark felt hat, and a woman in a pink poncho. A Kentucky Fried Chicken sign that reads. "Follo Frito Kentucky".

A woman goes by with a baby slung on her back and a felt hat on her head. The men and women in native costume all seem to wear these hats. As we approach the flotel Colon International, the Indian costume mixes with men and women in cootemporay usits and dresses, under aigns that read. "discotece, gallerio, restaurante."

From our room high up in this contemporary hotel, it is easy to get our bearings. The modern city is around and behind us. Ahead, past great green

A clarification

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A story in last week's Travel section about a trip to New York should have mentioned that it was similar to one sponsored by the Observer & Eccen-tric. The trip is being planned in cooperation with Hamilton, Miller, Hudson and Fayne Travel of Southfield.

Ecuador: New and old contrast in Quito

parks, the rooftops of the centuries-old colonial section of the city run ribbed-red to the foot of Pane-cillo (Little Breadrul) Filli, the coalcal bill with the Virgin of Quito on its top.

It takes two hours of sleep to get rid of the jet lag, and then we are on a bus again touring the city. Our feet litch to walk those wonderful streets, and they will, but we have learned from experience that a quick bus tour is a good way to get your bearings in a new city.

a quick bus tour is a good way to get your bearings in a new city.

Patriclo recounts ancient history as we drive past elegant old colonial houses, contemporary isant buildings and the curved glass of the cultural museum to the lookout at Belavista, where the handsome-if-older Hotel Intercontinental looks down past the 17th century Sanctuary of Guapulo to the deep valley and the eastern range of the Andes. Quito is a constantly climbing road of wonderful views.

THE OLD COLONIAL part of Quito is the most

THE OLD COLONIAL part of Quito is the most child, and the central shopping area of the city. Staggered, red-tile roottops and old wroughing abloroise lean over streets built of stoces from the old line acity on which Quito stands.

Everything moves here between the small shops, the ancient plass, the church onnes and the archovered streets. Business suits, stylish dresses, shool uniforms, tourist aleaks. But mostly there is the costume that will imprial itself on my mind at he most lasting limpa of Breader: the multiple colored skirts, or trousers, of the proud, poor, Indian people, with their ponches and dark felt basts. They move purposefully across independence Squars, the beautiful city center sided by the President's Palace, La Catefarl and the Curuch of La Concepcion. They move down the wonderful old streets, past the 17th century Church La Compania and the monastary of San Agustin, to the heart of the old city, the Plazae of San Francisco.

CHURCH POMES and crossess make a skyline all

and the monastary of San Agustin, to the heart of the old city, the Plaza of San Francisco.

CHURCH DOMES and crosses make a skyline all around as Indians in ponches and hats sit on the steps at the edge of the plaza, where heavy autoraffic constantly inches by Faces of every color move across the plaza, in pigitalis, in long tresses, under fedoras and carrying burdess on their heads. On the curved steps in front of the church women sell vandles, bright unbrellats make an informal marketplace and a child offers to shine your shoes. Against the sky, we can see the statue of the Virgin of Quito. We bead there now, winding up the mountainsides. At the top, an Otavalo Indian with his wife and three children are selling hand-made wall langings for \$9 each.

There is a wonderful personal excitement to the exchange as we buy from him, A wide, proud smile dominates his strong face, with its large hooked nose and long, traditional black pigtail under a black felt hat.

The woman is wrapped in the traditional long, dark shirts of the Otavalo with many strings of gold-colored beads making a huge choker around her neck.

His this image of the Indian in poncho and felt

ner neck.

It is this image of the Indian in poncho and felt hat that I will carry with me down the Valley of the Volcanoes and home as a permanent personal memory of Ecuador.

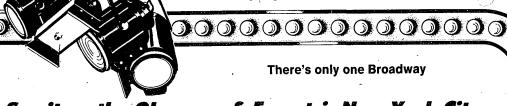
Next week: The Valley of the Volcanoes.



(S-11B,F-7D,Ro, +8C,P,C,W,G-13A,R-10A)++17C

Independence Square is a center of activity in Quito.

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