

## **Venezuela: A Land (Classic Reprint)**

William Eleroy Curtis

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Excerpt from Venezuela: A Land

On the 20th of May, 1499, a fleet of four vessels left the harbor of Cadiz bound for the Indies. It had been chartered and equipped by rich merchants of Seville, and was commanded by a young Castilian knight named Alonzo de Ojeda, who had been with Columbus on his second voyage, and whose adventures in Hispaniola were the talk of all Spain. Second in command was Juan de la Cosa. He was formerly the pilot or chief mate of Columbus, and comes down in history as the author of the first map of the New World, which he drew upon an ox-hide. The original still hangs upon the walls of the Marine Museum in Madrid.

Another of the party - whether a passenger or a partner in the enterprise is not wholly clear - was a Florentine merchant with a taste for geography and literature. As manager of the commission-house of Juanoto Berardi at Seville he had furnished the supplies for Columbus's fleet, and afterwards obtained an official position under Ferdinand and Isabella.

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