

**[To The Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, London]  
[HMS] Briton, Valparaiso, 18th Oct., 1814.**

I have the honour to inform you that on my passage from the [Marquesas islands](#) to this port, on the morning of the 17th September, I fell in with an island where none is laid down in the Admiralty or other charts, according to the several chronometers of the [Briton](#) and Tagus. I therefore hove to, until day-light, and then closed to ascertain whether it was inhabited, which I soon discovered it to be, and, to my great astonishment, found that every individual on the island (forty in number), spoke very good English. They proved to be the descendants of the deluded crew of the [Bounty](#), who, from Otaheite<sup>1</sup>, proceeded to the above-mentioned island, where the ship was burnt.

[Christian](#) appeared to have been the leader and sole cause of the mutiny in that ship. A venerable old man, named [John Adams](#), is the only surviving Englishman of those who last quitted Otaheite in her, and whose exemplary conduct, and fatherly care of the whole of the little colony, could not but command admiration. The pious manner in which all those born on the island have been reared, the correct sense of religion which has been instilled into their young minds by this old man, has given him the pre-eminence over the whole of them, to whom they look up as the father of one and the whole family.

A son of Christian was the first born on the island, now about twenty-five years of age, named [Thursday October Christian](#); the elder Christian fell a sacrifice to the jealousy of an Otaheitan man, within three or four years after their arrival, on the island. The mutineers were accompanied thither by six Otaheitan men and twelve women ; the former were all swept away by desperate contentions between them and the Englishmen, and five of the latter died at different periods, leaving at present only one man (Adams) and seven women of the original settlers.

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<sup>1</sup> [Tahiti](#)

The island must undoubtedly be that called [Pitcairn](#), although erroneously laid down in the charts. We had the altitude of the meridian sun close to it, which gave us 25° 4' S. latitude, and 130° 25' W. longitude, by the chronometers of the Briton and Tagus.

It produces in abundance yams, plantains, hogs, goats, and fowls; but the coast affords no shelter for a ship or vessel of any description; neither could a ship water there without great difficulty.

I cannot, however, refrain from offering my opinion, that it is well worthy the attention of our laudable religious societies, particularly that for propagating the Christian religion, the whole of the inhabitants speaking the Otaheitan tongue as well as the English.

During the whole of the time they have been on the island, only one ship has ever communicated with them, which took place about six years since, and this was the American ship Topaz, of Boston, [Mayhew Folger](#), master.

The island is completely iron-bound with rocky shores, and the landing in boats must be at all times difficult, although the island may be safely approached within a short distance by a ship.

**(Signed) T. Staines.**

Extracted from  
*A Narrative of the Briton's Voyage to Pitcairn's Island*  
Lieut. John Shillibeer, London, 1817