

Only after some years of harsh captivity, did she discover that the "Agayasieu" (the Cree name for the English), who supplied the Crees and Savanois, belonged to an entirely strange race, good-natured and generous, friendly with all the aborigines, and coming from the far east to trade with them. Her mind was then soon made up. She succeeded in reaching Fort Churchill alone, and as she had learned enough of the Algonquin dialect to make herself understood by the interpreters of the fort, she was enabled to let the Hudson's Bay Company's officers know that she belonged to the great nation of "Men" (Tinneys), living far off in the west, and professing honesty and fair behavior like the English. She expressed her determination of returning to her own people and begged for assistance on the way home, promising to establish friendly relations between her countrymen and the officers of the company, who, glad of the opportunity of extending the sphere of their commercial transactions, gave her a sledge and dogs, with various presents, and a safe conduct through the land of the Killini. Attracted by these presents, the Chipewyans at once undertook the long voyage from the Peace River to the mouth of the Churchill, calling the fort "Thé-yé" (stone house), and its inhabitants "Thé-yé Ottiné" (men of the stone house), a name by which the English are still known among the Tinneys.

These relations continued to the time when Joseph Frobisher established Fort Chipewyan, on the shores of Lake Athabasca, in 1778, for the North-west Company, at which date there were as many as 1200 Redskins settled on the Lake. But the white man brought with him the horrible disease of small-pox, till then unknown to the Americans, which made great ravages among the Tinneys, and more than decimated the Crees, driven to the southern part of the lake by the warlike attitude of the Chipewyans. Influenza, an epidemic catarrhal affection, attacking the tribes at regular intervals of about seven years, completed the work of the small-pox. Reduced to a very small number, the Crees ceased all hostile action against the Chipewyans, who had become their superiors, both in number and in strength; so that the possession of the lake, and indeed of the territory of Athabasca, remained with the Tinneys, who permitted a few Crees and Savanois to remain among them.