

came, and, to my grief, I got word from my hunters that they were not coming to the trading-house; but would pass about two days' journey to the south, on the route for Santa Fé, to get wild horses, etc. The next morning, my interpreter and four men were on their way to their camp, to collect all they could on account of goods advanced to the hunters on credit the preceding fall. They collected twenty-five per cent. less than was due; but I had a chance of making up the nominal loss by trade with those who did come to my post, and I sent word to the band who had cheated me, that I would not give them any credit next fall.

In the autumn [of 1809], I delayed reaching my wintering-grounds, in the Big Stone Lake region, until the middle of November, and suffered much inconvenience in consequence, being obliged to assist the men in breaking the ice in many places, and sometimes to wade up to our middles in water to drag the boat through the ice. We at length, however, reached our old trading-post about four o'clock of an afternoon, found fifty or sixty lodges there; and we had just time to stow away my goods in the house, where the men slept. My interpreter, his wife, and I, preferred to spend our nights in my large leathern lodge, or markee, until the necessary repairs should be made in the house for our winter's comfort.

Some of the Indians inquired whether I intended to give them credit as formerly; and I, reminding them of their ill-treatment of me in only partially paying their last year's debts, said I should not trust them again. We got our supper as usual; and as was the custom, my lodge was soon filled with Indian visitors, smoking and telling stories. The interpreter and his wife lay down, and I soon followed suit, and hardly closed my eyes when the interpreter spoke to me in a low voice, not calculated to awaken suspicion, saying his wife informed him, that the Indians were talking of killing us, and seizing the goods. I turned over quietly and took a smoke, and intimated to my interpreter to do the same, meanwhile joking with the Indians around us in the lodge about swan shooting, etc. We took down our guns on pretence of getting them ready for the morning's shooting; but, in truth, for our defense, if necessary. I had my tomahawk and knife all ready to kill before being killed.