

The House of Gordon

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WILLIE MACINTOSH.

This ballad perhaps refers to events of the year 1592. "In the north there was likewise great unquietness [in 1592]; for the clan Chattan conducted by Angus Williamson, to revenge the Earl of Murray's death, made great spoil upon the Earl of Huntly's lands in Strathspey and Glenmuick, killing divers and amongst others an honest aged man, called Gordon of Brackley, against whom they could pretend no quarrel. Huntly, to be revenged of this wrong, made an incursion upon the lands of Pettie, which the clan Chattan did then possess, exercising great cruelty; and, understanding that William Mackintosh was at the same time spoiling the lands of Colerick [Cabrach], encountered him at the head of Staplegate Hill, where after a short conflict three score of the clan Chattan were killed, a few only falling of his side" (Spottiswoode's *Church of Scotland*, ii., 424).

Verses 1, 4, 8 are taken from Finlay's *Ballads*, the others from Laing's *Thistle of Scotland*. "The Stepler" is a hill a little south of Auchindown.

As I came in by Fiddich-side
In a May morning,
I met Willie Macintosh
An hour before the dawning.

"Turn, Willie Macintosh,
Turn, turn, I bid you;
Gin ye burn Auchindown,
Huntly will head you."

"Head me, or hang me,
That canna fley me;
I'll burn Auchindown,
Ere the life lea' me."

As I came in by Auchindown
In a May morning,
Anchindown was in a bleeze
An hour before the dawning.

Coming ower Cairn Croorn
And looking down, man,
I saw Willie Macintosh
Burn Auchindown, man.

“Bonny Willie Macintosh,
Where left ye your men?”
“I left them in the Stepler,
But they’ll never come hame.”

“Bonny Willie Macintosh,
Where now is your men?”
“I left them in the Stepler,
Sleeping in their sheen.

Crawing, crawing,
For my crouse crawing
I lost the best feather i’ my wing,
For my crouse crawing.”