



**REGINALD EASTON (1807 - 1893)**

**Portrait miniature of Prince Albert of Schleswig-Holstein (1869-1931), when a child; seated in a landscape wearing lace-trimmed dress and pink sash and holding grapes**

Circa: Circa 1871

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Watercolour and bodycolour on ivory

Ivory registration number: 6LD164CZ

Gilt-metal mount and frame, blue leather reverse

Oval, 8.7 cm (3.4 inches) high

Prince Albert was a grandson of Queen Victoria, named after his grandfather Albert. The child in the portrait was, perhaps understandably, misgendered in the past – probably due to his appearance in this portrait in what we would now think of as feminine garb. The bare shoulders and pink sash rationalise the traditional assertion that this portrait represented Albert's sister, Princess Marie Louise. The correct identification can be verified by a copy in the Royal Collection after this miniature by Clémentine Antoinette Pepin (Active 1866-78).<sup>1</sup> As the copy by Pepin was commissioned after the present work by Queen Victoria in 1871, we can assume that this portrait by Easton dates from the same year.

Born at Frogmore House, Windsor, Albert was the second child of Prince Christian of Schleswig-Holstein and Princess Helena, daughter of Queen Victoria. The Queen was at Osborne House when her daughter gave birth but rushed to Frogmore to see her new grandchild as soon as she was able, declaring him as 'a fine large child, with a quantity of dark hair.' Around the time this miniature was painted, Queen Victoria reported to Louise, Marchioness of Lorne (25 December 1872) that; 'Little Abby is a great darling & so good – & very pretty & full of conversation'. A portrait dated 1873 by George Koberwein (1820-76), shows Albert in traditional Victorian male dress of a suit and neck tie after he had been breeched (i.e. been dressed in trousers).

Albert, known as 'Abby' to his family, was brought up modestly for a royal child, often playing with children local to their home, Cumberland Lodge. Of the five siblings, none had legitimate children of their own. His mother Helena's last child, a boy named Harald, lived for just a few days.

As an adult, Albert joined the Prussian army and commissioned Lieutenant into the 1st Hessian Dragoon Guards eventually reaching the rank of lieutenant colonel in the 3rd Uhlans of the Guard. During World War I he was excused from fighting against the British by the German Emperor, and spent the war in Berlin on the staff of the Governor of the city.

Albert succeeded his cousin Duke Ernest Günther of Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg-Augustenburg as heir to the Augustenburg estates in 1921. He died unmarried in Berlin in 1931, leaving no legitimate heirs but a daughter, Valerie Marie, Duchess of Arenburg, who was acknowledged by her aunts, Princess Helena Victoria and Princess Marie Louise.