Princess Helena of the United Kingdom

Princess Helena of the United Kingdom VA CI GDVO GBE RRC (Helena Augusta Victoria; 25 May 1846 - 9 June 1923) was the third daughter and fifth child of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert.

Helena was educated by private tutors chosen by her father and his close friend and adviser, Baron Stockmar. Her childhood was spent with her parents, travelling between a variety of royal residences in Britain. The intimate atmosphere of the royal court came to an end on 14 December 1861, when her father died and her mother entered a period of intense mourning. Afterwards, in the early 1860s, Helena began a flirtation with Prince Albert's German librarian, Carl Ruland. Although the nature of the relationship is largely unknown, Helena's romantic letters to Ruland survive. After the Queen found out in 1863, she dismissed Ruland, who returned to his native Germany, and he never lost the Queen's hostility.

Helena was the most active member of the royal family, carrying out an extensive programme of royal engagements. She was also an active supporter of nurse registration against the advice of Florence Nightingale. In 1916 she became the first member of her family to celebrate her 50th wedding anniversary, but her husband died a year later. Helena outlived him by six years, and died aged 77 at Schomberg House on 9 June 1923.

Early life

Helena was born at Buckingham Palace, the official royal residence in London, on 25 May 1846, the day after her mother's 27th birthday. She was the third daughter and fifth child of the reigning British monarch, Queen Victoria, and her husband Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha. Albert reported to his brother, Ernest II, the Duke of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, that Helena "came into this world quite blue, but she is quite well now." He added that the Queen "suffered longer and more than the other times and she will have to remain very quiet to recover." Albert and Victoria chose the names Helena Augusta Victoria. The German nickname for Helena was Helenechen, later shortened to Lenchen, the name by which members of the royal family invariably referred to Helena. As the daughter of the sovereign, Helena was styled Her Royal Highness. The Princess Helena from birth. Helena was baptised on 25 July 1846 at the private chapel at Buckingham Palace. Her godparents were the Hereditary Grand Duke of Mecklenburg-Strelitz (the husband of Queen's cousin), the Duchess of Orleans (for whom the Queen's mother the Duchess of Kent stood proxy); and the Duchess of Cambridge (the Queen's aunt).

Helena was a lively and outspoken child, and reacted against brotherly teasing by punching the bully on the nose. Her early talents included drawing. Lady Augusta Stanley, a lady-in-waiting to the Queen, commented favourably on the three-year-old Helena's artwork.

Like her sisters, she could play the piano to a high standard at an early age. Other interests included science and technology, shared by her father Prince Albert, and horseback riding and boating, two of her favourite childhood occupations. However, Helena became a middle daughter following the birth of Princess Louise in 1848, and her abilities were overshadowed by her more artistic sisters.

Death of Prince Albert

Helena's father, Prince Albert, died on 14 December 1861. The Queen was devastated, and ordered her household, along with her daughters, to move from Windsor to Osborne House, the Queen's Isle of Wight residence. Helena's grief was also profound, and she wrote to a friend a month later: "What we have lost can never be replaced, and our grief is most most bitter ... I adored Papa, I loved him more than anything on earth, his word was most a sacred law, and he was my help and adviser ... These hours were the happiest of my life, and now it is all, all over."

The Queen relied on her second eldest daughter Princess Alice as an unofficial secretary, but Alice needed an assistant of her own. Though Helena was the next eldest, she was considered unreliable by Victoria because of her inability to go long without bursting into tears. Therefore, Louise was selected to assume the role in her place. Alice was married to Prince Louis of Hesse in 1862, after which Helena assumed the role—described as the "crutch" of her mother's old age—by one biographer—her mother's side. In this role, she carried out minor secretarial tasks, such as writing the Queen's letters, helping her with political correspondence, and providing her with company.

Marriage

Marriage controversy

Princess Helena began an early flirtation with her father's former librarian, Carl Ruland, following his appointment to the Royal Household on the recommendation of Baron Stockmar in 1859. He was trusted enough to teach German to Helena's brother, the young Prince of Wales, and was described by the Queen as "useful and able". When the Queen discovered that Helena had grown romantically attached to a royal servant, he was promptly dismissed back to his native Germany, and he never lost the Queen's hostility.

Following Ruland's departure in 1863, the Queen looked for a husband for Helena. However, as a middle child, the prospect of a powerful alliance with a European royal house was discouraging. Her appearance was also a concern, as by the age of fifteen she was described by her biographer as chunky, dowdy and double-chinned. Furthermore, Victoria insisted that Helena's future husband be prepared to live near the Queen, thus keeping her daughter nearby. Her choice eventually fell on Prince Christian of Schleswig-Holstein; however, the match was politically awkward, and caused a severe breach within the royal family.

Schleswig and Holstein were two territories fought over between Prussia and Denmark during the First and Second Schleswig Wars. In the latter, Prussia and Austria defeated Denmark, but the duchies were claimed by Austria for Prince Christian of Schleswig Holstein. However, following the Austro-Prussian War, in which Prussia invaded and occupied the duchies, they became Prussian, but the title Duke of Schleswig Holstein was still claimed by Prince Christian's family.

The marriage, therefore, horrified King Christian IX of Denmark's daughter, Alexandra, Princess of Wales, who exclaimed: "The Duchies belong to Papa." Alexandra found support in her husband, his brother Prince Alfred, and his second sister, Princess Alice, who openly accused her mother of sacrificing Helena's happiness for the Queen's convenience. Alice also argued
that it would reduce the already low popularity of her sister, the Crown Princess of Prussia, at the court in Berlin. However, and unexpectedly, the Crown Princess, who had been a personal friend of Christian's family for many years, ardently supported the proposed alliance.

Despite the political controversies and their age difference—he was fifteen years her senior—Helena was happy with Christian and was determined to marry him. As a younger son of a non-royal dynasty, the absence of any foreign commitments allowed him to remain permanently in Britain—the Queen's primary concern—and she declared the marriage would go ahead. Helena and Christian were actually third cousins in descent from Frederick, Prince of Wales. Relations between Helena and Alexandra remained strained, and Alexandra was unprepared to accept Christian (who was also a third cousin to Alexandra in descent from King Frederick V of Denmark) as either a cousin or brother-in-law. The Queen never forgave the Princess of Wales for accusations of possessiveness, and wrote of the Walesees shortly afterwards: “Bertie is most affectionate and kind but Alix [pet name for Alexandra] is by no means what she ought to be. It will be long, if ever, before she regains my confidence.”

Engagement and wedding

The engagement was declared on 5 December 1865, and despite the Prince of Wales's initial refusal to attend, Princess Alice intervened, and the wedding was a happy occasion. The Queen allowed the ceremony to take place at Windsor Castle, albeit in the Private Chapel rather than the grander St George's Chapel on 5 July 1866. The Queen relieved her black mourning dress with a white mourning cap which draped over her back. The main participants filed into the chapel to the sound of Beethoven's *Triumphal March*, creating a spectacle only marred by the sudden disappearance of Prince George, Duke of Cambridge, who had a sudden *gout* attack. Christian filed into the chapel with his two supporters, Prince Edward of Saxe-Weimar, and Prince Frederic of Schleswig-Holstein, and Helena was given away by her mother, who escorted her up the aisle with the Prince of Wales and eight bridesmaids. Christian looked older than he was, and one guest commented that Helena looked as if she was marrying an aged uncle. Indeed, when he was first summoned to Britain, he assumed that the widowed Queen was inspecting him as a new husband for herself rather than as a candidate for one of her daughters. The couple spent the first night of their married life at Osborne House, before honeymooning in Paris, Interlaken and Genoa.

Married life

Helena and Christian were devoted to each other, and led a quiet life in comparison to Helena's sisters. Following their marriage, they took up residence at Cumberland Lodge in Windsor Great Park, the traditional residence of the Ranger of Windsor Great Park, the honorary position bestowed on Christian by the Queen. When staying in London, they lived at the Belated Suite in Buckingham Palace. The couple had six children. Christian Victor in 1867, Albert in 1869, and Helena Victoria and Marie Louise in 1870 and 1872 respectively. Their last two sons died early; Harald died eight days after his birth in 1876, and an unnamed son was stillborn in 1877. Princess Louise, Helena's sister, commissioned the French sculptor, Jules Dalou, to sculpt a memorial to Helena's dead infants.

Helena was an active president, and worked to keep the school on an even level with other schools. She personally wrote to the Privy Council, asked to maintain a list rather than a formal register of nurses.

Following the death of Queen Victoria in 1901, the new queen, Alexandra, insisted on replacing Helena as President of the Army Nursing Service. This gave rise to a further breach between the royal ladies, with King Edward VII caught in the middle between his sister and his wife. Lady Roberts, a courtesan, wrote to a friend: “matters were sometimes very difficult and not always pleasant.” However, in accordance with rank, Helena agreed to resign in Alexandra’s favour, and she retained presidency of the Army Nursing Reserve. Though thought to be merely an artefact created by society ladies, the RBNA was in favour of registration as a means of enhancing and guaranteeing the professional status of trained nurses, its incorporation with the Privy Council allowed it to maintain a list rather than a formal register of nurses.

The RBNA gradually went into decline following the Nurses Registration Act 1910; after six failed attempts between 1904 and 1918, the British parliament passed the bill allowing formal nurse registration.

Nursing

Helena had a firm interest in nursing, and was the founding chair of the Ladies' Committee of the British Red Cross, in 1870, playing an active role in recruiting nurses and organising relief efforts on the Franco-Prussian War front. In 1873, she became President of the British Nurses’ Association (RBNA) upon its foundation in 1887. In 1891, it received the prefix “Royal”, and received a Royal Charter the following year. She was a strong supporter of nurse registration, an issue that was opposed by Florence Nightingale, and leading public figures. In a speech Helena made in 1893, she made clear that the RBNA was working towards improving the education and status of those devoted and self-sacrificing women whose whole lives had been devoted to tending the sick, the suffering, and the dying. In the same speech, she warned against opposition and misrepresentation that she had encountered. Though thought to be merely an artefact created by society ladies, the RBNA was in favour of registration as a means of enhancing and guaranteeing the professional status of trained nurses, its incorporation with the Privy Council allowed it to maintain a list rather than a formal register of nurses.

Following the death of Queen Victoria in 1901, the new queen, Alexandra, insisted on replacing Helena as President of the Army Nursing Service. This gave rise to a further breach between the royal ladies, with King Edward VII caught in the middle between his sister and his wife. Lady Roberts, a courtesan, wrote to a friend: “matters were sometimes very difficult and not always pleasant.” However, in accordance with rank, Helena agreed to resign in Alexandra’s favour, and she retained presidency of the Army Nursing Reserve. Though thought to be merely an artefact created by society ladies, the RBNA was in favour of registration as a means of enhancing and guaranteeing the professional status of trained nurses, its incorporation with the Privy Council allowed it to maintain a list rather than a formal register of nurses.

The RBNA gradually went into decline following the Nurses Registration Act 1910; after six failed attempts between 1904 and 1918, the British parliament passed the bill allowing formal nurse registration. What resulted was the Royal College of Nursing (RCN), and the RBNA lost membership and dominance. Helena supported the proposed amalgamation of the RBNA with the new RCN, but that proved unsuccessful when the RBNA pulled out of the negotiations. However, she remained active in other nursing organisations, and was president of the Royal Women's Institute, and the first president of the newly established *School of Art Needlework* in 1872; in 1876, it acquired the “royal” prefix, becoming the Royal School of Needlework. In Helena's words, the objective of the school was: “first, to revive a beautiful art which had been well-nigh lost, and secondly, through its revival, to provide employment for gentlewomen who were without means of a suitable livelihood.” As with her other organisations, she was an active president, and worked to keep the school on an even level with other schools. She personally wrote to Royal Commissioners requesting money; for example, in 1895, she requested and acquired £30,000 for erecting a building for the school in South Kensington. Her royal status helped its promotion, and she held Thursday afternoon tea parties at the school for society ladies, who wanted to be seen in the presence of royal personages such as Princess Helena. When the Christmas Bazaar was held, she acted as chief saleswoman, generating long queues of people anxious to be served personally by her.

Helena was anxious to help children and the unemployed, and began hosting free dinners for their benefit at the Windsor Guildhall. She presided over two of these dinners, in February and March 1886, and over 3,000 meals were served to children and unemployed men during the harsh winter that year. Through her charitable activities, she became popular with the people; a contemporary author, C. W. Cooper, wrote that “the poor of Windsor worshipped her.”

Writing

Among Helena's other interests was writing, especially translation. In 1867, when the first biography of her father, the Prince Consort was written, the author, Sir Charles Grey, notes that the Prince's letters were translated (from German to English) by Helena “with surprising fidelity.” Other translations followed, and in 1887 she published her translation of The Memoirs of Wilhelmine, Margravine of Bayreuth. It was noted by the Saturday Review that Helena wrote an English version that was thoroughly alive, with a sound dictionary translation and a high accuracy in spirit. Her final translation was undertaken in 1882, on a German booklet called First Aid to the Injured, originally published by Christian's brother-in-law. It was republished several times until 1906.

Bergrässer affair

A copyright article written after the publication of letters written by Helena's sister, Princess Alice. In Germany, an edition of Alice's letters was published in 1883, by a Darmstadt clergyman called Karl Sell, who chose a selection of her letters made available to him by the Queen. When it was done, Helena wrote to Sell and requested permission to publish the German text into English, and it was granted, without the knowledge of the publisher Dr Bergrässer. In December 1883 Helena wrote to Sir Theodore Martin, a favour royal biographer, informing him that Bergrässer was claiming copyright of Alice's letters, and on that basis was demanding a delay in the publication of the English edition. Martin acted as an intermediary between Helena and Christian, and conseguated that Helena's English version of Alice's letters was published without requiring Bergrässer’s consent.
After Victoria

Edwardian period
Helena's favourite son, Prince Christian Victor, died in 1910, followed shortly by her mother, Queen Victoria, at Osborne House on 22 January 1901. The new King, Edward VII, did not have close ties with his surviving sisters, with the exception of Princess Louise, Helena's nephew, Prince Alexander of Battenberg (later Marquess of Carisbrooke) recorded that Queen Alexandra was jealous of the royal family, and would not invite her sisters-in-law to Sandringham. Moreover, Alexandra never fully reconciled herself to Helena and Christian following their marriage controversy in the 1860s.

Helena saw relatively little of her surviving siblings, and continued her role as a support to the monarchy and a campaigner for the many charities she represented. She and Christian led a quiet life, but did carry out a few royal engagements. On one such occasion, the elderly couple represented the King at the silver wedding anniversary, in 1906, of Kaiser Wilhelm II (Helena's nephew) and his wife Augusta Victoria (Christian's niece). During the Edwardian period, Helena visited the grave of her son, Prince Christian Victor, who died in 1900 following a bout with malaria while serving in the Second Boer War. She was met by South African Prime Minister Louis Botha, but Jan Smuts refused to meet her, partly because he was bitter that South Africa had lost the war and partly because his son had died in a British concentration camp.

Later years
King Edward died in 1910, and the First World War, began four years after his death. Helena devoted her time to nursing, and her daughter, Princess Marie Louise, recorded in her memoirs that requests for news of loved ones reached Helena and her sisters. It was decided that the letters should be forwarded to Crown Princess Margaret of Sweden, as Sweden was neutral during the war. It was during the war that Helena and Christian celebrated their golden wedding anniversary in 1916, and despite the fact that Britain and Germany were at war, the Kaiser sent a congratulatory telegram to his aunt and uncle through the Crown Princess of Sweden. King George V and Queen Mary were present when the telegram was received, and the King remarked to Helena's daughter, Marie Louise, that her former husband, Prince Aribert of Anhalt, did her a service when he turned her out. When Marie Louise said she would have run away to Britain if she was still married, the King, said, "with a twinkle in his eye", that he would have to intern her.

In 1917, in response to the wave of anti-German feeling that surrounded the war, George V changed the family name from Saxe-Coburg and Gotha to Windsor. He also disposed of his family's German titles and styles, so Helena and her daughters simply became Princess Christian, Princess Helena Victoria and Marie Louise with no territorial designation. Helena's surviving son, Albert, fought on the side of the Prussians, though he made it clear that he would not fight against his mother's country. In the same year, on 28 October, Prince Christian died at Schomberg House. Helena's last years were spent arguing with Commissioners, who tried to turn her out of Schomberg House and Cumberland Lodge because of the expense of running her households. They failed, as clear evidence of her right to live in those residences for life was shown.

Death
Princess Helena, Princess Christian of Schleswig-Holstein, died at Schomberg House on 9 June 1923 at the age of 77. Her funeral, described as a "magnificently stage-managed scene" by her biographer Seweryn Chomet, was headed by King George. The regiment of her favourite son, Prince Christian Victor, lined the steps of St. George's Chapel at Windsor Castle. Although originally interred in the Royal Vault at St George's on 15 June 1923, her body was reburied at the Royal Burial Ground, Frogmore, a few miles from Windsor, after its consecration on 23 October 1928.

Legacy
Helena was devoted to nursing, and took the lead at the charitable organisations she represented. She was also an active campaigner, and wrote letters to newspapers and magazines promoting the interests of nurse registration. Her royal status helped to promote the publicity and society interest that surrounded organisations such as the British Nurses' Association. The RBNA still survives today with Audrey Rose as president. Emily Williamson founded the Gentlewomen's Employment Association in Manchester; one of the projects which came out of this group was the Princess Christian Training College for Nurses, in Fallowfield, Manchester.

In appearance, Helena was described by John Van der Kiste as plump and dowdy; and in temperament, as placid, and business-like, with an authoritarian spirit. On one occasion, during a National Dock Strike, the Archbishop of Canterbury composed a prayer hoping for its prompt end. Helena arrived at the church, examined her service sheet, and in a voice described by her daughter as "the penetrating royal family whisper," said: "That prayer won't settle any strike."

Very lovely, with wavy brown hair, a beautiful little straight nose, and lovely amber-coloured eyes ... She was very talented: played the piano exquisitely, had a distinct gift for drawing and painting in water-colours ... Her outstanding gift was loyalty to her friends ... She was brilliantly clever, had a wonderful head for business. ...

Music was one of her passions; in her youth she played the piano with Charles Hallé, and Jenny Lind and Clara Butt were among her personal friends. Her determination to carry out a wide range of public duties won her widespread popularity. She twice represented her mother at Drawing Rooms, which was considered equivalent to being presented to the Queen herself.

Helena was closest to her brother, Prince Alfred, who considered his favourite sister. Though described by contemporaries as fearfully devoted to the Queen, to the point that she did not have a mind of her own, she actively campaigned for women's rights, a field the Queen abhorred. Nevertheless, both she and Beatrice remained closest to the Queen, and Helena remained close to her mother's side until the latter's death. Her name was the last to be written in the Queen's seventy-year-old journal.

Titles, styles and honours

### Titles and styles

- 25 May 1846 - 5 July 1866: Her Royal Highness The Princess Helena
- 5 July 1866 - 17 July 1917: Her Royal Highness Princess Christian of Schleswig-Holstein
- 17 July 1917 - 9 June 1923: Her Royal Highness Princess Christian

### Honours

1. 1 January 1878: Companion of the Order of the Crown of India
2. 29 April 1883: Member of the Royal Red Cross
3. 23 March 1896: Lady of Justice of the Venerable Order of St John
4. 10 February 1904: Royal Family Order of King Edward VII
5. 3 June 1911: Royal Family Order of King George V
6. 3 June 1918: Dame Grand Cross of the Order of the British Empire
7. Member 1st class of the Royal Order of Victoria and Albert
In 1858, Helena and the three younger of her sisters were granted use of the royal arms, with an inescutcheon of the shield of Saxony, and differentiated by a label of three points argent. On Helena's arms, the outer points bore roses gules, and the centre bore a cross gules. In 1917, the inescutcheon was dropped by royal warrant from George V.

**Issue**

Prince and Princess Christian had six children, four of whom lived to adulthood. They had one grandchild, Marie zu Schleswig-Holstein, who died in 1953 as their final descendant.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Birth</th>
<th>Death</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prince Christian Victor</td>
<td>14 April 1867</td>
<td>29 October 1900</td>
<td>His mother's favourite son; died unmarried and without issue while serving in the Boer War</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prince Albert</td>
<td>28 February 1869</td>
<td>27 April 1931</td>
<td>Succeeded as head of the House of Oldenburg in 1921; had one illegitimate daughter, Marie zu Schleswig-Holstein</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Princess Helena Victoria</td>
<td>3 May 1870</td>
<td>13 March 1948</td>
<td>Never married. One of her last public appearances was at the wedding of the future Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Princess Marie Louise</td>
<td>12 August 1872</td>
<td>8 December 1956</td>
<td>Married 1891; Prince Aribert of Arnhalt; no issue; marriage dissolved in 1900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prince Harald</td>
<td>12 May 1876</td>
<td>20 May 1876</td>
<td>Died an infant at eight days old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An unnamed stillborn son</td>
<td>7 May 1877</td>
<td>7 May 1877</td>
<td>Stillborn</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Ancestors of Princess Helena of the United Kingdom**

1. Princess Helena of the United Kingdom
2. Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha
3. Victoria of the United Kingdom
4. Ernest I, Duke of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha
5. Princess Louise of Saxe-Gotha-Altenburg
6. Prince Edward, Duke of Kent and Strathearn
7. Princess Victoria of Saxe-Coburg-Saalfeld
8. Francis, Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Saalfeld
9. Duchess Sophie Antoinette of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel
10. Augustus, Duke of Saxe-Gotha-Altenburg
11. Duchess Louise Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Schwerin
12. George IV of the United Kingdom
13. Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz
14. Francis, Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Saalfeld
15. Countess Augusta of Reuss-Ebersdorf
16. Ernest Frederick, Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Saalfeld
17. Princess Sophie Antoinette of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel
18. Henry XXIV, Count of Reuss-Ebersdorf
19. Countess Karoline Ernestine of Erbach-Schönberg
21. Princess Charlotte of Saxony
22. Frederick Francis I, Grand Duke of Mecklenburg
23. Countess Augusta of Reuss-Ebersdorf
24. Frederick, Prince of Wales
25. Princess Augusta of Saxony
26. Duke Charles Louis Frederick of Mecklenburg
27. Princess Elizabeth Albertine of Saxony-Hildburghausen
28. Ernest Frederick, Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Saalfeld
29. Duchess Sophie Antoinette of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel
30. Henry XXIV, Count of Reuss-Ebersdorf
31. Countess Karoline Ernestine of Erbach-Schönberg

**Notes**

1. * When King George V dropped the royal family's German names, styles and titles in 1917, the couple simply became Prince and Princess Christian with no territorial designation.
2. ^ Chomet, p. 6
3. ^ Chomet, p. 121
4. ^ Chomet, p. 9
5. ^ Bennet, p. 89
6. ^ Quoted in Chomet, p. 10
7. ^ Chomet, p. 11
8. ^ Chomet, p. 12
9. ^ Chomet, p. 10
10. ^ Bannet, p. 89
11. ^ Quoted in Chomet, p. 121
12. ^ Chomet, p. 11
13. ^ Chomet, p. 10
14. ^ Chomet, p. 10
15. ^ Bannet, p. 89
16. ^ Chomet, p. 11
17. ^ Chomet, p. 10
18. ^ Bannet, p. 89
19. ^ Chomet, p. 11
20. ^ Chomet, p. 10
21. ^ Bannet, p. 89
22. ^ Chomet, p. 11
23. ^ Chomet, p. 10
24. ^ Bannet, p. 89
25. ^ Chomet, p. 11
26. ^ Chomet, p. 10
27. ^ Bannet, p. 89
28. ^ Chomet, p. 11
29. ^ Chomet, p. 10
30. ^ Bannet, p. 89
31. ^ Chomet, p. 11

**References**

- Battisccombe, Georgina, Queen Alexandra (Constable & Company Ltd, London, 1969)
- Marie Louise (Princess Marie Louise of Schleswig-Holstein), My Memories of Six Reigns (Second edition, Penguin, Middlesex, 1959)

**External links**

- "Archival material relating to Princess Helena", UK National Archives
Princess Helena, Princess Christian of Schleswig-Holstein. Princess Helena was the fifth child and third daughter of Queen Victoria of The United Kingdom and Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha. She was born at Buckingham Palace on May 25, 1846. Known within the family as Lenchen, Helena’s childhood was spent in her mother’s various homes, in the care of nurses and nannies. An accomplished artist and pianist from a young age, she was often overshadowed in life by her siblings.