

the death of Princess Beatrice's husband Henry (Uncle "Liko" to Princess Alice) Lady Ely attempted to console Queen Victoria by saying: "Remember, dear Ma'am, you will one day meet dear Prince Henry again in Abraham's bosom." "Grandmama gave a snort," recalled Princess Alice, "and replied 'I will not go into Abraham's bosom'."

Outdoor pursuers

IF Princess Alice's joie de vivre was matched by her fearlessness, not only in the face of her grandmother but also in the path of big game, these were qualities inherited by her surviving daughter, Lady May Cambridge, who will be 75 in less than three weeks' time and whose husband, Col Sir Henry Abel Smith, was ADC to the Earl of Athlone as Governor-General of South Africa.

In those pre-conservationist days the Earl amassed an immense collection of hunting trophies and watched with pride as his daughter proved to be an intrepid crack shot. To her credit were an elephant with 70lb tusks, an antelope at 400 yards and, in Uganda on their journey home to England in 1931, a lion and lioness.

After Sir Henry was appointed Governor of Queensland in 1958, Princess Alice, then in her 70s, made three long visits, travelling throughout the country by rail, air, car and on foot. She much enjoyed reporting to the Transport Minister that the train to the St Isa copper mine shook so much that "I had to place my suitcase on my tummy to keep it down and finally to get some sleep." There were other hazards: in 1962 all three were guests at an afternoon muster on a farm where the menu included roast porcupine, baked snake, kangaroo tail soup and witchetty grubs.

Modulated amusement

THOSE who followed the BBC World Service's nine-part series about Queen Victoria—based on Royal Family letters and diaries, and starring Dame Peggy Ashcroft—were struck by the sad coincidence which brought, just hours after the final instalment, the news of the death of her last surviving grand-daughter and one most worthy of the same title: "Dear and Honoured Lady."

Princess Alice, of course, went cheerfully on record to argue that her grandmother *was* amused—often and uproariously so. This despite an aura of majesty, extending "to Windsor Castle and indeed to every place where she lived," which the Princess likened to the "presence" felt by Napoleon on entering Chartres Cathedral when he observed "that an atheist could not help feeling uncomfortable there."

In her delightful reminiscences, published in 1966 as "For My Grandchildren," Princess Alice recorded that "Grandmama Victoria . . . could be most formidable when aroused—though never with us grandchildren. We were not afraid of her; in fact, we were very fond of her." On one occasion the Princess was told: "You are a very naughty little girl"—in a quiet voice "which was none the less devastating"; and when she was about 12 and laughed too loudly at a dinner party, Victoria said: "Modulate your voice, Alice."

Others escaped less lightly. After