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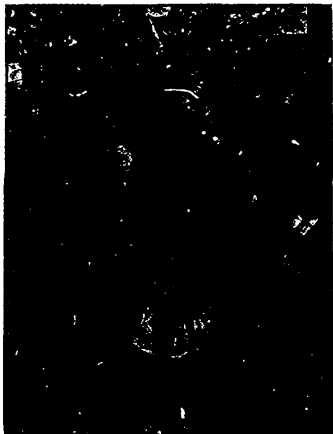
LET the starting point be where it may, the centre of interest on a trip around the world in these days is the Transvaal, with its massed forces of Britons and Boers, contesting at half a dozen different places for supremacy in a contest the final settlement of which will be brought with results reaching far beyond the immediate interests of either contestant, results which will cause heart-burnings and rearrangement of policies in every chancellery

in Europe. With the story of blood and battle so often repeated, it is pleasant

indeed to commence our trip this month with a scene that will appeal to the

gentler side of our natures, and which will yet stir our enthusiasm no less than those thrilling episodes of which we have a profusion in subsequent pages.

The devotion of Her Majesty to her subjects of all classes, and her sympathy with those in distress have been known since the days when the girl-queen first ascended the throne, over sixty years ago, and those qualities which have contributed so largely to the endearment of the sovereign to the people



THE QUEEN DISTRIBUTING GIFTS FROM HER CHRISTMAS TREE AT WINDSOR TO THE WIVES AND FAMILIES OF GUARDS AND RESERVISTS NOW AT THE FRONT