

## THE 'MILITIA'

It was one of the marked features of the Norman policy to keep alive the old English *fyrð* or militia; and the 'Assises of Arms' of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries carefully regulated the liability to serve. In the sixteenth century, the county militia, previously under the care of the King's sheriffs, was made the subject of an Act of Parliament and organized under a new county official, the Lord Lieutenant (p. 272) appointed by the Crown. At the Restoration of Charles II in 1660, the King's sole right to call out and command the militia (which had been denied by the Long Parliament of the Civil War) was fully confirmed by Act of Parliament; but the same statute introduced an elaborate scheme which virtually placed its control in the hands of the landowners of its own county. With the growth of population, it became unusual to train the whole of the male inhabitants of the country; and there was, in normal times, rarely any difficulty in raising sufficient numbers by voluntary enlistment. In the middle of the eighteenth century, however, provision was made by Act of Parliament for the regular drawing up of lists of persons liable to serve in the militia, and the holding of ballots to select by lot those who should actually be called up. During the Napoleonic wars, the militia, quite contrary to its original purpose, was freely made use of to provide drafts for foreign service, with the result that, as a defence force, it almost disappeared. Its place was taken in the middle of the nineteenth century by a body known as 'The Volunteers' (pp. 200, 201); though, as a matter of fact, the whole army was then a voluntary service body. In the year 1907, the remains of the old militia and the Volunteers were united by the new Territorial and Reserve Forces Act, which actually had in view a voluntary defence force though, as a