

*20-21. Then, seeing the people of Dhritarashtra's party standing arrayed and the discharge of weapons about to begin, Arjuna, the son of Pandu, whose ensign was a monkey, took up his bow and said these words to Krishna (Hrishikesha) , O Lord of the Earth!*

In these one and a half verses we have a description of the arrival of the hero of the *Mahabharata* war, Arjuna, on the battle-field. The exact time and nature of his entry are noted here. The shooting had not yet started, but it was imminent. It was the most tense moment; the crisis had risen to its highest pitch. It was at this moment that Arjuna, whose ensign was that of Hanuman, said the following words to Lord Krishna.

In those ancient days of chivalrous warfare, each honoured hero had his own personal flag, carrying on it conspicuously, a well-recognised symbol. By the flag flying on the chariot, the enemy could recognise who was the occupant of the chariot. A hero was not generally short at by an ordinary soldier, but each fought with his equal on the battle-field. This system of carrying a symbol to recognize individuals in the battle-field is faithfully followed even in modern warfare. A high official's vehicle carries insignia of the officer's rank on its very number-plate; on the very uniform enough details are pinned on to recognize the wearer and identify him. Arjuna's ensign was that of a monkey.