THE TURN
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I gazed at the article with incredulity. If I was the author, I would have definitely entitled it "Man and his Insensible Adventures" or "The Culmination of Scientific Stupidity". The article was about eighteenth century scientists who were amazed by Ben Franklin's discovery that lightning was actually electricity. Some scientists set out to prove the viability of this discovery and decided to hold long iron rods pointed to the sky in lightning infested areas. This kind of "experimenting"stopped after one scientist had died after being struck by lightning. Surely, even toddlers know that lightning is electricity!

It was getting late and I had to get out of the library. Electricity had always fascinated me. For the past few weeks, I had decided to do an intensive research about it, - its origin, current applications and potential applications in the future. When I reached at home, I was welcomed by a power blackout. Exasperated, I started criticizing the local electric supply company: it was ridiculous to pay for services which were not being delivered efficiently.

"I think there is a problem with our fuse in the main meter, can you check it out?"
My dad's concerned voice cut my train of thoughts.

I knew all about the fuse. It was a sacrificial over-current device with a small diameter, high resistant wire in the middle. When there was an overload in current, the wire melted and stopped the flow of electrons. This protected the device connected to the fuse. I was proud that I had such an in-depth theoretical knowledge about the fuse but then the fact that I could not use it to repair it hit me.

"Dad, I don't have the right equipment. Moreover, that would be very dangerous"

My mind then wandered back to the article that I had read that day in the library. I always esteemed science and innovation. As a scientist, I always dreamt of inventing a gadget that would impact on my society greatly. The early scientists held on their dreams with a fiery passion. They were undaunted by setbacks and challenges. The immense amount of knowledge that exists today in science is a combination of many little contributions by these hardworking people. If I was John Dalton's friend, I would have probably dismissed him as a schizophrenic after reading his findings about the atom. If I was a classmate to Lord Rutherford listening to a lecture by JJ Thompson, I would have wholly believed that electrons were enmeshed inside a lump of protons unlike Rutherford who went out experimenting and discovered that electrons encircled a nucleus composed of protons and neutrons. Great names in science surfaced in my mind. Isaac Newton, Albert Einstein , Archimedes , Michael Faraday , Ben Franklin all risked being sidelined by the society by having a free mind and daring to challenge widely accepted beliefs . They were ready to risk, even with their lives; this lay the pillar of technological advances. It now made sense to hold a pointed iron rod and wait for lightning to strike you. Undoubtedly, if such risks were not taken, we would not be having vast knowledge in the field of science.

"Trevor, you are so quiet." My dad woke me up from my reverie.

"Dad" I sprang up from my chair," I will check on the fuse!"

This time if anyone was to read an article about invention and risks, I wanted my name, Omangi Trevor, to be in it. I had discovered that it is only through idiocy, ignorance and risks that noble scientific discoveries have their foundation on.