

"Alchemist" Sculpture by Donald De Lee. Courtesy National Sculpture Society

The Alchemist

ENGINEERS VISITING the chemistry building of the University of Pennsylvania stop dead in their tracks on seeing this bas relief of the "Alchemist." Created by sculptor Donald De Lee, this work is highly symbolic of chemistry's dubious beginning.

The ancient alchemist tried without success to change base metals into gold, platinum, silver and other so-called "noble" metals. But where the alchemist failed, I figure that the modern metallurgist has succeeded.

Metallurgists have not only produced a metal alloy with noble properties, but at a cost far below those of the traditional noble metals. I'm talking about the familiar *high-nickel-chromium steels*, created by alloying iron with high percentages of nickel and chromium. Every power engineer knows how vital these metals are to our modern civilization, especially in the power plant.

My point is that many of our highly efficient tools and materials for turning out today's power at greatly lower rates had beginnings about as discouraging as the alchemists' experiments. But like the alchemist, there always were men who didn't know when they were licked.

All this proves that so long as you work toward improvement, you have a good chance of succeeding—if you stick to it.

George Edwards

Engineer

ARE CLOGGED LINES LIKE THESE CUTTING YOUR WATER SUPPLY?

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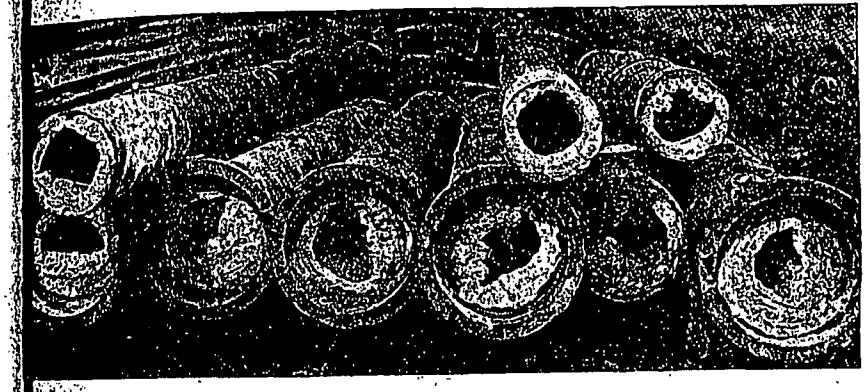

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