



[...] Now the essential point in Planck's theory of radiation is that the energy radiation from an atomic system does not take place in the continuous way assumed in the ordinary electrodynamics, but that it, on the contrary, takes place in distinctly separated emissions, the amount of energy radiated out from an atomic vibrator of frequency, in a single emission being equal to $\tau h\nu$, where τ is an entire number, and h is a universal constant.

[...]

It will now be attempted to show that the difficulties in question disappear if we consider the problems from the point of view taken in this paper. Before proceeding it may be useful to restate briefly the ideas characterizing the calculations on p. 5. The principal assumptions used are :

- (1) That the dynamical equilibrium of the systems in the stationary states can be discussed by help of the ordinary mechanics, while the passing of the systems between different stationary states cannot be treated on that basis.
- (2) That the latter process is followed by the emission of a homogeneous radiation, for which the relation between the frequency and the amount of energy emitted is the one given by Planck's theory.

[...]

Emission of line-spectra. Spectrum of hydrogen.

General evidence indicates that an atom of hydrogen consists simply of a single electron rotating round a positive nucleus of charge e . The reformation of a hydrogen atom when the electron has been removed to great distances away from the nucleus – e.g. by the effect of electrical discharge in a vacuum tube - will accordingly correspond to the binding of an

electron by a positive nucleus considered on p. 5. If in (3) [$W = \frac{2\pi^2 me^2 E^2}{\tau^2 h^2}$] we put E [charge of nucleus] = e, we get for the total amount of energy radiated out by the formation of one of the stationary states,

$$W_{\tau} = \frac{2\pi^2 me^4}{h^2 \tau^2}$$

The amount of energy emitted by the passing of the system from a state corresponding to $\tau = \tau_1$ to one corresponding to $\tau = \tau_2$, is consequently

$$W_{\tau_2} - W_{\tau_1} = \frac{2\pi^2 me^4}{h^2} \left(\frac{1}{\tau_2^2} - \frac{1}{\tau_1^2} \right).$$

If now we suppose that the radiation in question is homogeneous, and that the amount of energy emitted is equal to $h\nu$, where ν is the frequency of the radiation, we get

$$W_{\tau_2} - W_{\tau_1} = h\nu$$

and from this

$$\nu = \frac{2\pi^2 me^4}{h^3} \left(\frac{1}{\tau_2^2} - \frac{1}{\tau_1^2} \right).$$

We see that this expression accounts for the law connecting the lines in the spectrum of hydrogen. If we put $\tau_2 = 2$ and let τ_1 vary, we get the ordinary Balmer series. If we put $\tau_2 = 3$, we get the series in the ultra-red observed by Paschen and previously suspected by Ritz. If we put $\tau_2 = 1$ and $\tau_1 = 4, 5, \dots$, we get series respectively in the extreme ultraviolet and the extreme ultra-red, which are not observed, but the existence of which may be expected.

The agreement in question is quantitative as well as qualitative.