"The Emanations of Radium." By Sir William Crookes, F.R.S.
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A solution of almost pure radium nitrate which had been used for spectrographic work, was evaporated to dryness in a dish, and the crystalline residue examined in a dark room. It was feebly luminous.

A screen of platinocyanide of barium brought near the residue glowed with a green light, the intensity varying with the distance separating them. The phosphorescence disappeared as soon as the screen was removed from the influence of the radium.

A screen of Sidot's hexagonal blende (zinc sulphide), said to be useful for detecting polonium radiations, was almost as luminous as the platinocyanide screen in presence of radium, but there was more residual phosphorescence, lasting from a few minutes to half an hour or more according to the strength and duration of the initial excitement.

The persistence of radio-activity on glass vessels which have contained radium is remarkable. Filters, beakers, and dishes used in the laboratory for operations with radium, after having been washed in the usual way, remain radio-active; a piece of blende screen held inside the beaker or other vessel immediately glowing with the presence of radium.

The blende screen is sensitive to mechanical shocks. A tap with the tip of a penknife will produce a sudden spark of light, and a scratch with the blade will show itself as an evanescent luminous line.

A diamond crystal brought near the radium nitrate glowed with a pale bluish-green light, as it would in a "Radiant Matter" tube under the influence of cathodic bombardment. On removing the diamond from the radium it ceased to glow, but, when laid on the sensitive screen, it produced phosphorescence beneath, which lasted some minutes.

During these manipulations the diamond accidentally touched the radium nitrate in the dish, and thus a few imperceptible grains of the radium salt got on to the zinc sulphide screen. The surface was immediately dotted about with brilliant specks of green light, some being a millimetre or more across, although the inducing particles were too small to be detected on the white screen when examined by daylight.

In a dark room, under a microscope with a $\frac{2}{3}$-inch objective, each luminous spot is seen to have a dull centre surrounded by a luminous halo extending for some distance around. The dark centre itself appears to shoot out light at intervals in different directions. Outside the halo, the dark surface of the screen scintillates with sparks

of light. No two flashes succeed one another on the same spot, but are scattered over the surface, coming and going instantaneously, no movement of translation being seen.

The scintillations are somewhat better seen with a pocket lens magnifying about 20 diameters. They are less visible on the barium platinocyanide than on the zinc sulphide screen.

A powerful electro-magnet has no apparent effect on the scintillations, which appear quite unaffected when the current is made or broken, the screen being close to the poles and arranged axially or equatorially.

A solid piece of radium nitrate is slowly brought near the screen. The general phosphorescence of the screen as visible to the naked eye varies according to the distance of the radium from it. On now examining the surface with the pocket lens, the radium being far off and the screen faintly luminous, the scintillating spots are sparsely scattered over the surface. On bringing the radium nearer the screen the scintillations become more numerous and brighter, until when close together the flashes follow each other so quickly that the surface looks like a turbulent luminous sea. When the scintillating points are few there is no residual phosphorescence to be seen, and the sparks succeeding each other appear like stars on a black sky. When, however, the bombardment exceeds a certain intensity, the residual phosphorescent glow spreads over the screen, without, however, interfering with the scintillations.

If the end of a platinum wire which has been dipped in a solution of radium nitrate and dried is brought near the screen, the scintillations become very numerous and energetic, and cease immediately the wire is removed. If, however, the end of the wire touches the screen, a luminous spot is produced, which then becomes a centre of activity, and the screen remains alive with scintillations in the neighbourhood of the spot for many weeks afterwards.

"Polonium" basic nitrate produces a similar effect on the screen, but the scintillations are not so numerous.

Microscopic glass, very thin aluminium foil, and thin mica do not stop the general luminosity of the screen from the X-rays, but arrest the scintillations.

I could detect no variation in the scintillations when a rapid blast of air was blown between the screen and the radium salt.

A beam of X-rays from an active tube was passed through a hole in a lead plate on to a blende screen. A luminous spot was produced on the screen, but I could detect no scintillations, only a smooth uniform phosphorescence. A piece of radium salt brought near gave the scintillations as usual, superposed on the fainter phosphorescence caused by the X-rays, and they were not interfered with in any degree by the presence of X-rays falling on the same spot.

During these experiments the fingers soon become soiled with radium,

and produce phosphorescence when brought near the screen. On turning the lens to the, apparently, uniformly lighted edge of the screen close to the finger, the scintillations are seen to be closer and more numerous; what to the naked eye appears like a uniform "milky way," under the lens is a multitude of stellar points, flashing over the whole surface. A clean finger does not show any effect, but a touch with a soiled finger is sufficient to confer on it the property. Washing the fingers stops their action.

It was of interest to see if rarefying the air would have any effect on the scintillations. A blende screen was fixed near a flat glass window in a vacuum tube, and a piece of radium salt was attached to an iron rocker, so that the movement of an outside magnet would either bring the radium opposite the screen or draw it away altogether. A microscope gave a good image of the surface of the screen, and in a dark room the scintillations were well seen. No particular difference was observed in a high vacuum; indeed, if anything, the sparks appeared a trifle brighter and sharper in air than in vacuo. A duplicate apparatus in air was put close to the one in the vacuum tube, so that the eye could pass rapidly from one to the other, and it was so adjusted that the scintillations were about equal when each was in air. The vacuum apparatus was now exhausted to a very high point, and the appearance on each screen was noticed. Here again I thought the sparks in the vacuum were not quite so bright as in air, and on breaking the capillary tube of the pump, and observing as the air entered, the same impression was left on my mind; but the differences, if any, are very minute, and are scarcely greater than might arise from errors of observation.

It is difficult to form an estimate of the number of flashes of light per second. But with the radium at about 5 cm. off the screen they are barely detectable, not being more than one or two per second. As the distance of the radium diminishes the flashes become more frequent, until at 1 or 2 cm. they are too numerous to count.

[*Added March* 18.—On bringing alternately a Sidot's blende screen and one of barium platinocyanide, face downwards, near a dish of "polonium" sub-nitrate, each became luminous, the blende screen being very little brighter of the two. On testing the two screens over a crucible containing dry radium nitrate, both glowed; in this case the blende screen being much the brighter. Examined with a lens, the light of the blende screen was seen to consist of a mass of scintillations, while that of the platinocyanide screen was a uniform glow, on which the scintillations were much less apparent.

The screens were now turned face upwards so that emanations from the active bodies would have to pass through the thickness of card before reaching the sensitive surface. Placed over the "polonium"

neither screen showed any light. Over the radium the platinocyanide screen showed a very luminous disc, corresponding with the opening of the crucible, but the blende disc remained quite dark.

It therefore appears that practically the whole of the luminosity on the blende screen, whether due to radium or "polonium," is occasioned by emanations which will not penetrate card. These are the emanations which cause the scintillations, and the reason why they are distinct on the blende and feeble on the platinocyanide screen, is that with the latter the sparks are seen on a luminous ground of general phosphorescence which renders the eye less able to see the scintillations.

Considering how coarse-grained the structure of matter must be to particles forming the emanations from radium, I cannot imagine that their relative penetrative powers depend on difference of size. I attribute the arrest of the scintillating particles to their electrical character, and to the ready way in which they are attracted by the coarser atoms or molecules of matter. I have shown that radium emanations cohere to almost everything with which they come into contact. Bismuth,* lead, platinum, thorium, uranium, elements of high atomic weight and density, possess this attraction in a high degree, and only lose the emanations very slowly, giving rise to what is known as "induced radio-activity." The emanations so absorbed from radium by bismuth, platinum, and probably other bodies, retain the property of producing scintillations on a blende screen, and are non-penetrating.]

It seems probable that in these phenomena we are actually witnessing the bombardment of the screen by the electrons† hurled off by radium with a velocity of the order of that of light; each scintillation rendering visible the impact of an electron on the screen. Although, at present, I have not been able to form even a rough approximation to the number of electrons hitting the screen in a given time, it is evident that this is not of an order of magnitude inconceivably great. Each electron is rendered apparent only by the enormous extent of lateral disturbance produced by its impact on the sensitive surface, just as individual drops of rain falling on a still pool are not seen as such, but by reason of the splash they make on impact, and the ripples and waves they produce in ever-widening circles.

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* I have been quite unable to detect any lines but those of bismuth (and of known impurities) in the spectrum of the strongest and most active "polonium" salt I have been able to procure.

† Radiant matter, satellites, corpuscles, nuclei; whatever they are, they act like material masses.