

Physical Chemistry of Surfaces

Third Edition

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Preface

The character of this edition is much the same as that of the previous ones. I hope that it will continue to serve as a textbook for senior and graduate level courses, both of academic and of industrial venue. As before, it is assumed that students have completed the usual undergraduate year course in physical chemistry. I hope, too, that professional chemists will continue to find the book useful both for its references and as an entrée into a field that is too often neglected in formal training.

It is now 16 years since the first edition appeared, and I will not resist a brief retrospective glance. Much has happened; much has evolved. The first edition (1960) was largely classical in content and approach. There was much appreciation of the contributions of the great American and European schools. My own high people were N. K. Adam, E. Rideal, J. Schulman, J. W. McBain, W. D. Harkins, and I. Langmuir.

The second edition (1967) improved the general level and style (greatly, I am told). It also recognized those newer developments that were of textbook status. These were found particularly in the areas of solution surface chemistry and contact angle phenomena, and, to some extent, in the then emerging field of high vacuum surface physics and spectroscopy. The treatment of physical adsorption grew in sophistication. More attention was given to surface statistical thermodynamics.

This edition brings yet more emphasis on the molecular approach. There is now a veritable alphabet soup of phenomena: AES, APS, EIS, LEED, SIMS, to name a few. The growing bridge between such studies and heterogeneous catalysis is noticed. All chapters have been updated with respect to the literature, although this is now vast and I must apologize in advance for the major omissions that undoubtedly have occurred. New problems have been added, and the ordering of such problem sections has been brought into approximate parallel with that of subjects in the chapter. The book is some 10% longer; it is long enough.

The future looks exciting. I see great extensions of excited state studies, both photochemical and photophysical, to molecules residing at an interface. The fields of homogeneous and heterogeneous catalysis should come even closer as the ability to prepare surfaces with predesired structures becomes less of an art. Molecular biology is drawing more and more on interface chemistry and physics.

Less happily, we may see molecular and phenomenological surface chemistry become relatively distinct disciplines. The former will be a magnet attracting new investigators from all fields; the latter, however, will remain both a fundamental subject and one that is essential in a host of applied areas. Having no wish to encourage such separation, I have not anticipated it in the present writing. Nor have I accepted the awkward SI system of units—a system in no way designed to be either convenient or relevant to physical chemistry.

Much of this edition was prepared during a pleasant stay at the University of Hawaii. The hospitality of the Department of Chemistry and of Professor R. L. Pecsok in particular is gratefully appreciated. Many thanks go to the numerous colleagues who kindly sent me reprint collections; their suggestions were taken seriously and were largely followed.

I am especially indebted to students Patrick Hu and James Tse and to colleagues W. Wade and Vida Slawson for their reading of the galleys; the book is distinctly more errorfree because of their efforts. The many hours spent by my wife, Virginia, in reading proofs has made the book (if not the subject) partly hers.

ARTHUR W. ADAMSON

Los Angeles, California
April 1976

Contents

I. Capillarity.	1
1. Surface Tension and Surface Free Energy	1
2. The Equation of Young and Laplace	4
3. Some Experiments with Soap Films	6
4. The Treatment of Capillary Rise.	9
A. Introductory Discussion	9
B. Exact Solutions to the Capillary Rise Problem	10
C. Experimental Aspects of the Capillary Rise Method	15
5. The Maximum Bubble Pressure Method	16
6. The Drop Weight Method	18
7. The Ring Method	21
8. Wilhelmy Slide Method.	23
9. Methods Based on the Shape of Static Drops or Bubbles.	25
A. Pendant Drop Method	26
B. Sensile Drop or Bubble Method.	31
10. Dynamic Methods of Measuring Surface Tension	34
A. Flow Methods	34
B. Capillary Waves	36
11. Some Other Manifestations of Capillarity	36
12. Surface Tension Values as Obtained by Different Methods	38
13. Problems	40
General References.	43
Textual References.	43
II. The Nature and Thermodynamics of Liquid Interfaces	47
1. One-Component Systems	47
A. Surface Thermodynamic Quantities for a Pure Substance	47
B. The Total Surface Energy, E^s	49
C. Change in Vapor Pressure for a Curved Surface	51
D. Effect of Curvature on Surface Tension	52
E. Effect of Pressure on Surface Tension.	53
F. Effects of Other Variables	53
2. The Structural and Theoretical Treatment of Liquid Interfaces	54
A. Further Development of the Thermodynamic Treatment of the Surface Region	56
B. Calculation of the Surface Energy and Free Energy of Liquids	59

3. Orientation at Interfaces	61
4. The Surface Tension of Solutions	64
5. Thermodynamics of Binary Systems—the Gibbs Equation.	68
A. Definition of Surface Excess	68
B. The Gibbs Equation	70
C. Alternate Methods of Locating the Dividing Surface	71
D. The Thermodynamics of Surfaces Using the Concept of a Surface Phase	74
E. Other Surface Thermodynamic Relationships.	75
6. Verification of the Gibbs Equation—Direct Measurements of Surface Excess Quantities.	76
A. The Microtome Methods for Measuring Γ	77
B. The Tracer Method for Measuring Surface Excess	78
C. Ellipsometric Method for Measuring Surface Excess	80
7. Gibbs Monolayers	81
A. The Two-Dimensional Ideal Gas Law	82
B. Nonideal Two-Dimensional Gases	85
C. The Osmotic Pressure Point of View	88
D. Traube's Rule.	90
E. Some Further Comments on Gibbs Monolayers	91
8. Problems	92
General References.	95
Textual References.	96
III. Surface Films on Liquid Substrates	99
1. Introduction	99
2. The Spreading of One Liquid on Another	103
A. Criteria for Spreading	103
B. Kinetics of Spreading Processes	109
C. Lenses.	110
3. Experimental Techniques for the Study of Monomolecular Films	111
A. Measurement of π	111
B. Surface Potentials.	116
C. Surface Viscosities	118
D. Optical Properties of Monolayers.	124
E. The Ultramicroscope	127
F. Electron Microscopy and Diffraction	127
G. Other Techniques.	129
4. States of Monomolecular Films	129
5. Correspondence between π and a Three-Dimensional Pressure	133
6. Further Discussion of the States of Monomolecular Films	134
A. Gaseous Films	134
B. The Liquid Expanded State	135
C. Intermediate and L_2 Films.	138
D. The Solid State	139
E. Rheology of Monolayers.	140

CONTENTS

xi

F. Effect of Changes in the Aqueous Substrate	142
G. General Correlations between Molecular Structure and the Type of Film Formed	144
7. Thermodynamics of Monolayers	145
8. Mixed Films	148
9. Evaporation Rates through Monomolecular Films	152
10. Rate of Dissolving Monolayers	155
11. Reactions in Monomolecular Films	157
A. Kinetics of reactions in Films.	157
B. Kinetics of Formation and Hydrolysis of Esters	159
C. Reactions at a Double Bond	163
D. Other Chemical Reactions	
12. Protein and Polymer Films	164
A. General Properties and Structure	164
B. Reactions of Protein Films.	169
C. Protein Films at Oil-Water Interface	170
D. Other Films of Biological Interest	171
E. Polymer Films	171
13. Films at Liquid-Liquid Interfaces and on Liquid Surfaces Other Than Water	172
14. Charged Films	173
A. Equation of State of a Charged Film	173
B. Interfacial Potentials	177
15. Capillary Waves	179
16. Films Deposited on Solids.	182
A. Built-Up Films	182
B. Monolayers.	184
17. Problems	185
General References.	188
Textual References.	188
IV. Electrical Aspects of Surface Chemistry.	196
1. Introduction	196
2. The Electrical Double Layer	197
3. The Stern Treatment of the Electrical Double Layer.	201
4. The Free Energy of a Diffuse Double Layer	203
5. Repulsion between Two Plane Double Layers.	204
6. The Nature of the Different Parts of the "Double" Layer	205
7. Further Treatment of the Stern and Diffuse Layers	207
8. The Zeta Potential	208
A. Electrophoresis	209
B. Electroosmosis	211
C. Streaming Potential	212
D. Sedimentation Potential	213
E. Further Developments in the Theory of Electrokinetic Phenomena	214

F. General Observation on ζ Potentials—Stability of Colloids	214
9. Electrocapillarity	216
A. Thermodynamics of the Electrocapillary Effect.	218
B. Experimental Methods	221
C. Results for the Mercury–Aqueous Solution Interface	223
D. Effect of Uncharged Solutes and Changes of Solvent	226
E. Other Electrocapillary Systems	227
F. The Potential Difference between Two Phases	228
10. The Electrified Solid–Liquid Interface	228
A. Electrode–Solution Interface	229
B. Silver Halide–Solution Interface	229
11. Types of Potentials and the Meaning of Potential Differences When Two Phases are Involved	230
A. The Various Types of Potentials	230
B. Volta Potentials, Surface Potential Differences, and the Ther- mionic Work Function.	233
C. Electrochemical and Electrode Potentials	234
D. Irreversible Electrode Phenomena	236
12. Problems	239
General References	241
Textual References	241
V. Surfaces of Solids	244
1. Introduction	244
A. The Surface Mobility of Solids—Sintering	244
B. Effect of Past History on the Condition of Solid Surfaces	246
2. Thermodynamics of Crystals.	248
A. Surface Tension and Surface Free Energy	248
B. The Equilibrium Shape of a Crystal.	250
C. The Kelvin Equation	252
3. Theoretical Estimates of Surface Energies and Free Energies	253
A. Covalently Bonded Crystals	253
B. Rare Gas Crystals	254
C. Ionic Crystals.	256
D. Molecular Crystals	260
E. Metals	260
4. Factors Affecting the Surface Energies and Surface Tensions of Actual Crystals.	261
A. State of Subdivision	261
B. Deviations from Ideal Considerations	261
C. Dislocations	263
D. Surface Heterogeneity	267
5. Experimental Estimates of Surface Energies and Free Energies	268
A. Methods Depending on the Direct Manifestation of Surface Tensional Forces	268
B. Surface Energies and Free Energies from Heats of Solutions	270

C. Relative Surface Tensions from Equilibrium Shapes of Crystals	272
D. Dependence of Other Physical Properties on Surface Energy Changes at a Solid Interface	272
6. Methods for Determining Surface Structure and Composition	274
A. Scanning Electron Microscopy	278
B. Low Energy Electron Diffraction	278
C. Field Emission and Field Ion Microscopy	283
D. Ion Scattering	289
E. Auger Electron Spectroscopy	291
F. Photoelectron Spectroscopy	293
7. Reactions of Solid Surfaces	294
8. Problems	297
General references	299
Textual References	300
VI. Long-Range Forces	305
1. Forces between Atoms and Molecules	305
2. Qualitative Evidence for Long-Range Forces	310
A. Evidence for Deep Surface Orientation	310
B. Apparent Long-Range Interaction Between Macromolecules	312
C. Entropy Considerations in the Case of Highly Asymmetric Molecules	313
3. Long-Range Forces	316
A. Dispersion or van der Waals Force	316
B. Electrical Double Layer Interactions	319
C. Dipole-Induced Dipole Propagation	320
D. "Hydrophobic" Interactions	321
4. Experimental Verification of Long-Range Forces	321
A. Direct Measurement of Long-Range van der Waals Attraction	321
B. Electrical Double Layer Repulsion	323
C. Anomalous Water	326
5. Problems	328
General References	330
Textual References	330
VII. The Solid-Liquid Interface—Contact Angle Nucleation	333
1. Introduction	333
2. Surface Free Energies from Solubility Changes	334
3. Surface Energy and Free Energy Differences from Immersion and Adsorption Studies	335
A. Heat of Immersion	335
B. Surface Energy and Free Energy Changes from Adsorption Studies	337
4. Contact Angle Phenomena	339
A. Contact Angles	339

B. Measurement of Contact Angle.	342
C. Nonuniform Surfaces	345
D. Hysteresis in Contact Angle Measurements	347
E. Results of Contact Angle Measurements.	351
5. Some Theoretical Aspects of Contact Angle Phenomena	357
A. Thermodynamics of the Young Equation	357
B. Semiempirical Models—The Girifalco–Good–Fowkes–Young Equation	360
C. Potential–Distortion Model.	362
6. Problems	364
General References.	367
Textual References	368
VIII. The Formation of a New Phase—Nucleation and Crystal Growth	372
1. Introduction	372
2. Classical Nucleation Theory.	373
3. Results of Nucleation Studies	378
4. Crystal Growth.	381
5. Problems	383
General References.	383
Textual References	383
IX. The Solid–Liquid Interface—Adsorption from Solution	385
1. Adsorption of Nonelectrolytes from Dilute Solution	385
A. Adsorption Isotherms	386
B. Qualitative Results of Adsorption Studies—Traube’s Rule.	389
C. Multilayer Adsorption	394
2. Adsorption of Polymers.	396
3. Surface Area Determination	400
4. Adsorption in Binary Liquid Systems.	402
A. Adsorption at the Solid–Solution Interface.	402
B. Interrelations Between Adsorption at Different Interfaces.	407
C. Heat of Adsorption at the Solid–Solution Interface.	410
5. Adsorption of Electrolytes	411
A. Stern Layer Adsorption	411
B. Surface Areas from Negative Adsorption	414
C. Counterion Adsorption—Ion Exchange	417
6. Problems	419
General References.	422
Textual References	422
X. Friction and Lubrication—Adhesion	426
1. Introduction	426
2. Friction Between Unlubricated Surfaces	426
A. Amontons’ Law.	426
B. Nature of the Contact Between Two Solid Surfaces.	427

C. Role of Shearing and Plowing—Explanation of Amontons' Law	430
D. Static and "Stick-Slip" Friction.	432
3. Two Special Cases of Friction	433
A. Use of Skid Marks to Estimate Vehicle Speeds.	433
B. Ice and Snow.	434
4. Metallic Friction—Effects of Oxide Films	435
5. Friction Between Nonmetals.	436
A. Relatively Isotropic Crystals	436
B. Layer Crystals	437
C. Plastics.	437
6. Some Further Aspects of Friction	438
7. Friction Between Lubricated Surfaces	441
A. Boundary Lubrication	441
B. The Mechanism of Boundary Lubrication	443
8. Adhesion	451
A. Ideal Adhesion	451
B. Practical Adhesion	452
9. Problems	454
General References.	456
Textual References.	456
XI. Wetting, Flotation, and Detergency	459
1. Introduction	459
2. Wetting	459
A. Wetting as a Contact Angle Phenomenon	459
B. Wetting as a Capillary action Phenomenon	461
C. Tertiary Oil Recovery	462
3. Water Repellency	462
4. Flotation	464
A. The Role of Contact Angle in Flotation.	464
B. Flotation of Metallic Minerals	469
C. Flotation of Nonmetallic Minerals	471
5. Detergency	474
A. General Aspects of Soil Removal.	474
B. Properties of Colloidal Electrolyte Solutions	476
C. Factors in Detergent Action	480
D. Adsorption of Detergents on Fabrics	482
E. Detergents in Commercial Use	483
6. Problems	484
General References.	486
Textual References.	486
XII. Emulsions and Foams	490
1. Introduction	490
2. Emulsions—General Properties	491

3. Factors Determining Emulsion Stability.	492
A. Macroscopic Theories of Emulsion Stabilization	493
B. Specific Chemical and Structural Effects	494
C. Long-Range Forces as a Factor in Emulsion Stability.	496
D. Stabilization of Emulsions by Solid Particles	499
4. The Aging and Inversion of Emulsions	500
A. Flocculation and Coagulation Kinetics.	500
B. Inversion and Breaking of Emulsions	502
5. Spontaneous Emulsification—Micellar or Microemulsions.	504
6. Hydrophile–Lipophile Balance	505
7. Practical Aspects of Emulsions	507
8. Foams—The Structure of Foams.	508
9. Foam Drainage	511
A. Drainage of Single Films.	511
B. Drainage of Foams	513
10. The Stability of Foams	513
11. Foaming Agents and Foams of Practical Importance	516
12. Problems	517
General References	518
Textual References	518
 XIII. The Solid–Gas Interface—General Considerations	 522
1. Introduction	522
2. The Surface Area of Solids	523
A. The Meaning of Surface Area	523
B. Methods Requiring Knowledge of the Surface Free Energy or Total Energy	526
C. Rate of Dissolving	527
D. Surface Areas from the Electrical Potential of an Adsorbed Layer	529
E. The Mercury Porosimeter	529
F. Other Methods of Surface Area Estimation	532
3. The Structural and Chemical Nature of Solid Surfaces	534
4. The Nature of Solid–Adsorbate Complex	535
A. Effect of Adsorption on Adsorbate Properties	535
B. Effects of the Adsorbate on the Adsorbent	542
C. The Adsorbate–Adsorbent Bond	543
5. Problems	544
General References	544
Textual References.	545
 XIV. Adsorption of Gases and Vapors on Solids	 548
1. Introduction	548
2. The Adsorption Time.	551

3. The Langmuir Adsorption Isotherm	552
A. Kinetic Derivation	553
B. Statistical Thermodynamic Derivation	554
C. Adsorption Entropies	557
D. Lateral Interaction	561
E. Experimental Applications of the Langmuir Equation.	562
4. Experimental Procedures	563
5. The BET and Related Isotherms.	565
A. Derivation of the BET Equation	567
B. Properties of the BET Equation	569
C. Modifications of the BET Equation	570
6. Isotherms Based on the Equation of State of the Adsorbed Film	571
A. Types of Force–Area Diagrams from Adsorption Isotherms	571
B. Adsorption Isotherms from Two-Dimensional Equations of State	572
7. The Potential Theory	575
A. The Polanyi Treatment	575
B. Correspondence between the Potential Theory and That of a Two-Dimensional Film	577
C. Isotherms Based on an Assumed Variation of Potential with Distance	578
D. The Polarization Model	580
8. Comparison of the Surface Areas from the Various Multilayer Models	582
9. The Characteristic Isotherm and Related Concepts.	584
10. Potential Theory as Applied to Submonolayer Adsorption	586
11. Adsorption Steps and Phase Transformations	589
12. Thermodynamics of Adsorption.	592
A. Theoretical Considerations	592
B. Experimental Heats and Entropies of Adsorption.	597
13. Critical Comparison of the Various Models for adsorption	603
A. The Langmuir—BET Model	603
B. Two-Dimensional Equation of State Treatments	604
C. The Potential Model	605
14. Adsorption on Heterogeneous Surfaces	607
A. Site Energy Distributions	607
B. Thermodynamics of Adsorption on Heterogeneous Surfaces	613
15. Rate of Adsorption	615
16. Adsorption on Porous Solids—Hysteresis	616
A. Molecular Sieves	616
B. Capillary Condensation	618
C. Micropore Analysis	623
17. Problems	625
General Rerences	628
Textual References.	628

XV. Chemisorption and Catalysis	635
1. Introduction	635
2. Chemisorption—The Molecular View	636
A. LEED Structures	636
B. Spectroscopy of Chemisorbed Species	636
C. Work Function and Related Measurements	639
D. Flash Desorption	639
3. Chemisorption Isotherms	641
A. Variable Heat of Adsorption	642
B. Effect of Site and Adsorbate Coordination Number	645
C. Adsorption Thermodynamics	646
4. Kinetics of Chemisorption	646
A. Activation Energies	646
B. Rates of Adsorption	649
C. Rates of Desorption	652
5. Surface Mobility	652
6. The Chemisorption Bond	655
A. The Localized Bond Approach	655
B. Metals	658
C. Semiconductors	660
D. Acid-Base Systems	662
7. Mechanisms of Heterogeneous Catalysis	664
A. Adsorption or Desorption as the Rate-Determining Step	664
B. Reaction Within the Adsorbed Film as the Rate-Determining Step	665
8. Influence of the Adsorption Isotherm on the Kinetics of Heterogeneous Catalysis	667
A. Unimolecular Surface Reactions	668
B. Bimolecular Surface Reactions	670
C. Effects of Isotherm Complexities	670
9. Mechanisms of a Few Catalyzed Reactions	671
A. Ammonia Synthesis	671
B. Fischer-Tropsch Type Reactions	673
C. Hydrogenation of Ethylene	674
D. Catalytic Cracking of Hydrocarbons and Related Reactions	675
10. Problems	676
General References	678
Textual References	679
Index	683

CHAPTER I

Capillarity

1. Surface Tension and Surface Free Energy

The material of this book, according to its title, deals with the physical chemistry of surfaces. Although an obvious enough point, it is perhaps worth noting that in reality we will always be dealing with the *interface* between two phases and that in general the properties of an interface will be affected by changes in either of the two phases involved.

The types of interfaces possible can be summarized in a formal way in terms of the three states of matter—solid, liquid, and gas:

gas-liquid
gas-solid
liquid-liquid
liquid-solid
solid-solid

A general prerequisite for the stable existence of an interface between two phases is that the free energy of formation of the interface be positive; were it negative or zero, the effect of accidental fluctuations would be to expand the surface region continuously and to lead to eventual complete dispersion of one material into the other. Examples of interfaces whose free energy per unit area is such as to offer no opposition to dispersive forces would be those between two dilute gases or between two miscible liquids or solids. Even in the case of two immiscible liquids, the presence of a suitable third component can so affect the interfacial free energy that spontaneous emulsification occurs (see Section XII-5).

The topic of capillarity concerns interfaces that are sufficiently mobile to assume an equilibrium shape. The most common examples are menisci and drops formed by liquids in air or in another liquid and thin films such as that forming a soap bubble. Because it deals with equilibrium configurations, capillarity occupies a place in the general framework of

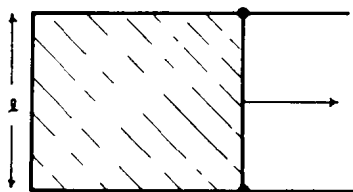


Fig. I-1

thermodynamics—it deals with the macroscopic and statistical behavior of interfaces rather than with the details of their molecular structure.

Although referred to above as a free energy per unit area, surface tension may equally well be thought of as a force per unit length. Two examples serve to illustrate these viewpoints. Consider, first, a soap film stretched over a wire frame, one end of which is movable (Fig. I-1). Experimentally one observes that a force is acting on the movable member in the direction opposite to that of the arrow in the diagram. If the value of this force per unit length is denoted by γ , then the work done in extending the movable member a distance dx is

$$\text{Work} = \gamma dx \quad (\text{I-1})$$

Equation I-1 could be equally well written as

$$\text{Work} = \gamma d\mathcal{A} \quad (\text{I-2})$$

where $d\mathcal{A} = dx$ and thus gives the change in area. In this second formulation, γ appears to be an energy per unit area. Customary units, then, may either be erg/cm² or dyne/cm; these are identical dimensionally.

A second illustration involving soap films is that of the soap bubble. We will choose, here, to think of γ in terms of energy per unit area. In the absence of fields, such as gravitational, a soap bubble is spherical, this being the shape of minimum surface area for a given enclosed volume. Consider a soap bubble of radius r , as illustrated in Fig. I-2. Its total surface free energy is $4\pi r^2\gamma$ and, if the radius were to decrease by dr , then the change in surface free energy would be $8\pi r\gamma dr$. Since shrinking decreases the surface energy, the tendency to do so must be balanced by a pressure difference across the film ΔP , such that the work against this pressure difference $\Delta P 4\pi r^2 dr$ is just equal to the decrease in surface free energy. Thus,

$$\Delta P 4\pi r^2 dr = 8\pi r\gamma dr \quad (\text{I-3})$$

or

$$\Delta P = 2\gamma/r \quad (\text{I-4})$$

One thus arrives at the important conclusion that the smaller the bubble, the greater the pressure of the air inside as compared to that

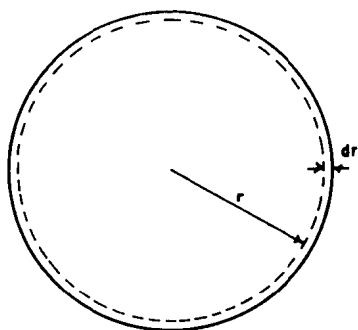


Fig. I-2

outside. This conclusion is easily verified experimentally by arranging two bubbles with a common air connection, as illustrated in Fig. I-3. The arrangement is unstable, and the smaller of the two bubbles will shrink while the other enlarges. Note, however, that the smaller bubble does not shrink indefinitely; once its radius is equal to that of the tube the radius will begin to increase with further shrinkage and a stage must be reached such that the two radii become equal, as shown by the dotted lines. This final state is now one of mechanical equilibrium.

It might be noted that common usage defines γ as the surface tension for *one* interface. Because of this, it would be better to use the quantity 2γ instead of γ in the equations above when they *are applied to soap or other two-sided films*.

The examples above illustrate the point that equilibrium surfaces may be treated mathematically, using either the concept of surface tension or the (mathematically) equivalent concept of surface free energy. (The derivation of Eq. I-4 from the surface tension point of view is given as an exercise at the end of the chapter.) This mathematical equivalence holds

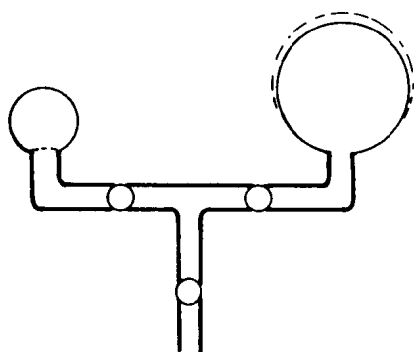


Fig. I-3. Illustration of the equation of Young and Laplace.