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In this chapter the properties of isolated magnetic moments will be examined. At this stage, interactions between magnetic moments on different atoms, or between magnetic moments and their immediate environments, are ignored. All that remains is therefore just the physics of isolated atoms and their interaction with an applied magnetic field. Of course that doesn't stop it being complicated, but the complications arise from the combinations of electrons in a given atom, not from the fact that in condensed matter there is a large number of atoms. Using this simplification, the large number of atoms merely leads to properties like the magnetic susceptibility containing a factor of n, the number of atoms per unit volume.

2.1 An atom in a magnetic field

In Section 1.1 (see eqn 1.35) it was shown that an electron spin in a magnetic field parallel to the z axis has an energy equal to

E: Statistical mechanics