

ber of chromosomes, which regularly occurs in the division of all of its cells, and in all forms arising by sexual reproduction, the number is even."

Whatever the offspring is, it is potential in the fertilized ovum. If this is the contribution of each parent, the role performed by the mother is that of custodian of her embryonic charge until birth. Her power to alter it in any way is as futile as that of the father. The parent is rather the trustee of the germ plasm than the producer of the child. Sir Michael Foster once said, "The animal body is in reality a vehicle for the ova; and after the life of the parent has become potentially renewed in the offspring, the body remains as a cast-off envelope whose future is but to die." The germ plasm is "the lighted torch handed on from one runner to another." *Et quasi cursores vitai lampada tradunt.* This equally true of plant life, where the plant matures and dies leaving the future offspring potentially in the seed. How characteristics are transmitted from ancestor to offspring is not known.

NOTE:—It has been estimated that the number of cells entering into the composition of the body of an adult human being is about twenty-six million five hundred thousand millions (26,500,000,000,000).