

# Nathan Chandler Foot

*July 27, 1881 — September 4, 1958*

Dr. Nathan Chandler Foot, Professor Emeritus of Surgical Pathology, Cornell University Medical College, and consultant in surgical pathology at The New York Hospital, died September 4, 1958, at the New Rochelle Hospital of pulmonary embolism. He is survived by his wife, Emma May Cobb Foot; his daughter, Mrs. John C. Besson; a sister, Valeria D. Foot; and four grand-children. Another daughter, Dr. Ellen B. Foot Neumann, died in 1945.

Chandler Foot was born in New York City on July 27, 1881. He received his A.B. from Harvard College in 1903 and his M.D. from the College of Physicians and Surgeons, Columbia University, in 1907, following which he had resident training at The New York Hospital and then spent two years in Germany studying pathology. He was on the staff of the Department of Pathology at Harvard from 1912 to 1915 and subsequently was on the faculty of the College of Medicine, University of Cincinnati, becoming Professor of Pathology at that institution in 1928. In 1932, he came with George Heuer to the newly created New York Hospital-Cornell Medical Center to assume the dual post of Professor of Pathology in Surgery and head of the Laboratory of Surgical Pathology. In this capacity, he served with great distinction for 16 years. In 1948, he became Professor Emeritus and thereafter, until his death, engaged in cancer research in the Papanicolaou Cytology Laboratory of Cornell University Medical College, successively in the Departments of Anatomy and Pathology.

He was a member of numerous medical societies, including the American Association of Pathologists and Bacteriologists, the Harvey Society, and the American Association for the Advancement of Science. For several years, he served on the American Board of Pathology and was in due course its president; he was also a consultant to the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology in Washington, Fellow of the College of American Pathologists, a member of the New York Pathological Society, of which he was president in 1936-1937, and a Member of the New York Practitioners' Society. His many scientific papers dealt mainly with the diagnosis of cancer, and so, too, did his textbooks *Pathology in Surgery* and *Identification of Tumors*.

Chandler Foot was loved and esteemed by his associates and by the long succession of medical students who came into his classes, as much because of his charm and wit and varied interests as for his wide learning and compassion. His geniality made it easy for him to pass on to others the things he knew. In music, he was not only an avid student and listener—he took his own scores to concerts and followed these closely—but also an accomplished piano and accordion player; many a student-faculty gathering, which might otherwise have been formal and stiff, was made

warm and lively by his playing and presence. Admiring art in all its forms, he painted as well, first in oils and later in water colors, particularly ocean and beach scenes; numbers of his works won the critical acclaim of experts and not a few of them now adorn the homes and offices of his friends. His proficiency in cowboy pool, together with his large measure of what the Scots call innerliness, endeared him to such of his friends as also found this game interesting and relaxing, and with these—artists, writers, and architects, as well as lawyers and physicians—he spent many hours in the clubhouse of the Century Association. A bird-watcher, Chandler Foot knew well the forms, colors, songs, and habits of those creatures, and the outlook and language of those of his companions who shared this interest with him. Woodworking and metalworking also gave him pleasure, a beautifully mitered joint no less than the finished product; an example of the latter was the elaborate miniature railway station, replete with furnishings, ticket offices, and a motor-driven elevator with stops on three levels, which he designed and made to complement the electric trains of his grandson. So, too, with foreign languages, he was not content to be a mere learner: in addition to reading widely in French, German, and Italian literature, he spoke Hungarian fluently and also had knowledge of Chinese. He once posted a directive on the door of the refrigerator in his laboratory telling orderlies and nurse's aides in seven languages where to place specimens!

The content of his scientific papers and books, the wealth of carefully studied material which he left for his successors in the Laboratory of Surgical Pathology and the memories and notes of the thousands of medical students whom he taught provide of course the tangible measure of Chandler Foot's achievements as physician, teacher, and scientist. But quite as surely it can be said that his most enduring influence as a teacher was exerted upon those of George Heuer's resident surgeons who were fortunate enough to have periods of training in his laboratory during the years 1932-1948. Few of these outstanding men, now mature surgeons, failed to respond to his geniality and enthusiasm, or to respect and learn from his careful clinical judgments, and many would say with gratitude that his guidance largely determined their outlook upon medicine and life. How fortunate he was to have found wide scope for his talents, and happiness besides! How fortunate too are those of us who knew him; for we can recall with pleasure what he was and what he did, and, what is more, can note with admiration the reflections of his influence in the lives of those who share his memory with us.

*J. G. Kidd*