

# The XVI<sup>th</sup> International Medical Conference Budapest, 1909

The International Medical Congresses series started in Paris in 1867 and continued until 1913. The XVI<sup>th</sup> meeting, in Budapest, ran from 29 August to 2 September 1909, and was a grand affair. Over 5,000 delegates attended, and witnessed the entrance of his Royal and Imperial Highness the Archduke Joseph sweeping down the redoubt. Every congress member was given a scholarly medical guide to Budapest, a ticket for free use of the local baths and a fine bronze medallion designed by the sculptor György Vastagh.

As Cushing recorded in his diaries, the welcoming reception was something of a zoo, teeming with 'males...not too wrapped up in the affairs of science...who did not hesitate to push and struggle, to climb and crawl...to arrive at the refreshment tables'. European politics were evident, for example in a boycott of the congress by the Romanians over an issue of race and language. The English delegates found themselves the target of some disapproval when a letter from the Anti-alcohol Association, signed by Sir Victor Horsley, urged congress members to refuse the two small bottles of Tokaj wine offered as a gift from the Hungarian Ministry of Agriculture. There were many soirees and a performance at the national theatre of Madách's 'Tragedy of Man' (an apt title, given the course of European history in the next few decades).

