A King's Treasures
By CYRIL RAY
New York Times (1857-Current file); Mar 14, 1954; ProQuest Historical Newspapers The New York Times (1851 - 2002)
pg. SM57

A King's Treasures

Farouk's collections sell briskly at Cairo.

By CYRIL RAY

A KING'S treasures are being auctioned off these days in Cairo at prices which could be called a king's ransom. They are the royal treasures of ex-King Farouk, a fabulous collection of stamps, coins and silver, clocks, jeweled boxes and other works of artisans, that he left behind when he abdicated Egypt's throne following General Naguib's coup of July, 1952. The sale which began in February and will last through this month is being compared by experts to the dispersions of the Stuart treasures under Cromwell 300 years ago and the contents of Versailles by French Revolutionaries in 1793.

The scene of the sale is the same Koubbeh Palace Farouk fled. The palace and its contents were expropriated in the name of the Egyptian people,



© Punch.
Acquisitive Farouk—Punch depicts him bidding on his own collection.

the contents—except a collection of Egyptian antiquities and the royal library retained for Egypt's National Museum—to be sold to all comers.

Much of the treasure was inherited by Farouk, but he himself, in spite of his reputation as a playboy, his vulgar vagaries of taste, and his tendency to collect not only erotica but gaudy rubbish, like a jackdaw, for the sake of collecting—in spite of all this, he himself made notable additions to the royal collections. He collected with tremendous zeal, considerable taste and knowledge and an apparently inexhaustible pocket. His particular passion for paperweights made him a famous figure in European salesrooms and set the prices soaring; his abdication shook the market.

THE numismatic collection is one of the greatest in the world, and with the stamps, which already have brought about $350,000, much of it from American collectors, and works of art added—even though there are no paintings and no furniture—the sale is

(Continued on Page 59)

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

(Continued from Page 57)
incomparable in the modern age.

Sure to bring high bidding later this month are such exquisite toys as the Swiss and French singing-bird boxes; the enameled and pearl encrusted watches on the faces of which tiny mechanical figures play musical instruments at every hour; the toy pistols made of gems and precious metals from the muzzles of which when "fired," jeweled birds spring forth, perch on the barrels,



A prize among Farouk's items is this 19th century musical watch.

sing their tinkling songs, and disappear.

There is a gold tray, encrusted with diamonds, that takes two hands to lift, with two dozen coffee-cup holders in gold and precious stones to match, that must be fabulously costly; and a unique Swiss fan of Napoleon's time that conceals a watch in one enameled and pearl studded stick, a musical box in another. Among the snuffboxes, of agate or bloodstone or amethyst or rock-crystal, mounted with gold, are two made to the order of Frederick the Great in his own Potsdam workshops



Golden Easter egg, originally made for Frederick the Great.

—of hardstone mounted in gold with floral sprays of diamonds.

Even such prosaic instruments as telescopes, made in Switzerland a couple of centuries ago, are gay with colored enamels on gold, and embellished with diamond sprays. Even so matter-of-fact a Near Eastern necessity as a flywhisk has a handle of jeweled enamels; even such a toy as a child's rattle has a handle of jade, a head fashioned in the shape of a crown, in diamonds and emeralds, surmounted by a star and crescent, all in diamonds. It was only half in jest, that one of the directors of Sotheby's, the venerable fine arts auction firm of London, said during the pre-sale cataloguing: "Those things rattling inside are probably only rubies."

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.