

## December 31-- European New Year's Eve

On New Year's Eve, Bulgarians<sup>1)</sup> perform fortunetelling tricks with leaves and water glasses. Finns have been known to do the same with molten<sup>2)</sup> tin and buckets. In the lower Rhine, it was once customary<sup>3)</sup> to play cards frenziedly<sup>4)</sup> until the stroke of midnight. The Greeks, too, play cards and sing songs about Saint Basil; and the Belgians and Swiss remember Sylvester with the custom of calling the last person to awaken in a household on New Year's Eve morning, man or woman, a "Sylvester." An old custom in Madrid involved standing at the foot of the Puerta del Sol, in front of the Department of the Interior, where a huge clock strikes the hours, and to swallow, at the stroke of twelve, twelve grapes one after the other. The Viennese counterpart was the custom of releasing live pigs in restaurants at midnight, at which point the diners raced around chasing them. More sedate Austrians call New Year's Eve "smoke night," and content themselves with ritually<sup>5)</sup> purifying homes and storehouses with incense<sup>6)</sup> and holy water. Latvians hold masquerade<sup>7)</sup> parties, and Rumanians sing a carol concerning Emperor Trajan and a bull.

### 12月31日：欧洲人的除夕

在除夕那天，保加利亚人用树叶和水杯算命玩。据说芬兰人也一样，只不过是用铸造的锡块和水桶来玩。在莱茵河下游，过去人们疯狂地玩牌直至午夜钟声敲响。希腊人也玩牌，同时还唱歌颂圣巴西勒的歌曲。比利时人和瑞士人有纪念西尔维斯特的习俗，称家中在除夕的早上最后一位醒来的男士或女士为“西尔维斯特”。在马德里有一个古老习俗：人们站在内政部前的太阳门前，当大钟敲响12点的时候，他们就一口气吞下12颗葡萄。维也纳人的习俗是在午夜放掉餐馆里的活猪，而此时在餐馆用餐的人就跑去追赶它们。相对安静的奥地利人称除夕为“烟夜”。他们会像举行仪式般地用焚香和圣水来熏洒房子和仓库，能这样做他们就心满意足了。拉脱维亚人举行化妆舞会。罗马尼亚人则唱圣歌，歌颂图拉真皇帝和公牛。

### NOTE 注释：

1. Bulgarian [bʌl'gɛəriən] n. 保加利亚人[语]
2. molten ['mɒltən] adj. 熔铸的
3. customary ['kʌstəməri] adj. 习惯的，惯例的
4. frenziedly ['frenzidli] adv. 疯狂地
5. ritually ['ritjuəli] adv. 依据仪式上地，仪式上地
6. incense [in'sens] n. 熏香，熏香的烟
7. masquerade [ˌmæskə'reɪd, mɑ:s-] n. 化妆舞会