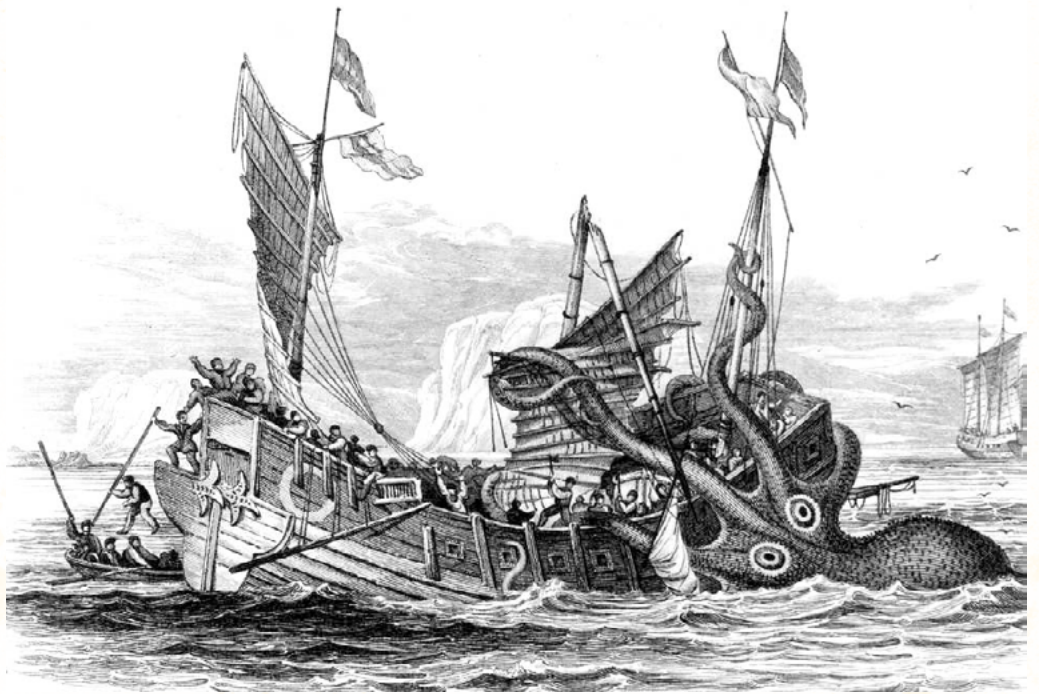




· I K U T U R S O ·

The North Sea lord is the Iku-Turso, a giant octopus that inhabits the depths. Originally from Pohjola, the legendary territory from which, accor-



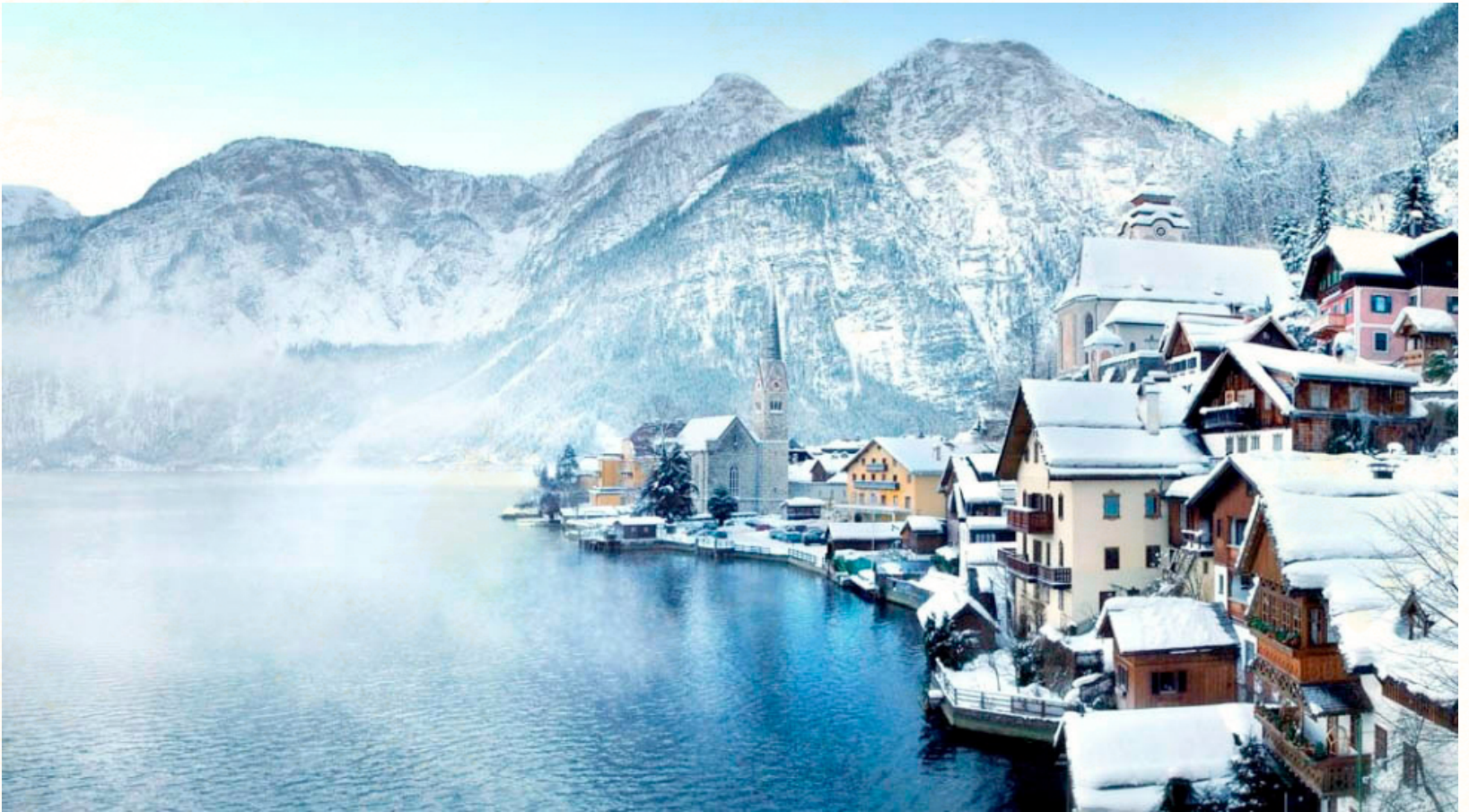
ding to Finnish folklore, all evils come, the Iku-Turso likes to travel the Baltic Sea on the lookout for victims. It is even said to have colonized inland lakes, although the latter is unverified.

Of uncertain origin, this evil animal already appears in the Finnish national epic, the Kalevala, and its power is such that it has sometimes been considered the true god of war. What is certain is that his taste for combat is unquestionable. When a naval battle takes place in the Baltic, it usually arises from the depths and gets into the fight, sinking as many ships as it can.



Iku-Turso is a **FINNISH** creature

Current population: 5.513.000



The Finnish people are one of the oldest in Europe, and share with the Basque their status as non-Indo-European culture. This Nordic territory was populated by the Sami since ancient times, but 10,000 years ago it received migrations from the Finnish ancestors coming from the Russian Urals. With their knowledge of agriculture, the Finns gradually displaced the Sami to the northernmost regions and developed a culture without a central state or organization, based on small self-sufficient villages. Fishing and agriculture provided their livelihood, along with a certain level of trade.

Finland belonged to the Scandinavian area of influence, and received an important Swedish migration. Throughout the 12th to 16th centuries Sweden became the dominant power. Swedish nobles seized

the land and sent Christian missionaries to convert the natives. For centuries, Russia and Sweden disputed power in this territory, which became the domain of the tsars in the 18th century.

During the 19th century a nationalist movement began to vindicate Finnish sovereignty, achieving independence in 1918. At a crossroads between Russia and Western Europe, Finland maintained a rare neutrality during the 20th century, while undergoing major social and economic transformations. From being one of the poorest countries on the continent, the Finns managed to place themselves at the forefront of economic development and social welfare in the world. This meant abandoning the agricultural and rural way of life and embarking on a very intense process of industrialisation.

Finnish mythology emerged in the early stages of this culture, both popular and oral. Pre-Christian, it manifests a polytheistic conception of the world, with anthropomorphic gods and heroes, and with a cosmogony that shows a flat Earth, with a sky supported by a hill on which the polar star rests. For centuries this mythology was spread and developed by the rhapsodists, until the growing interest in local tradition in the nineteenth century led to its recovery and formalization in written works. The most famous, the Kalevala, was published in 1835.

