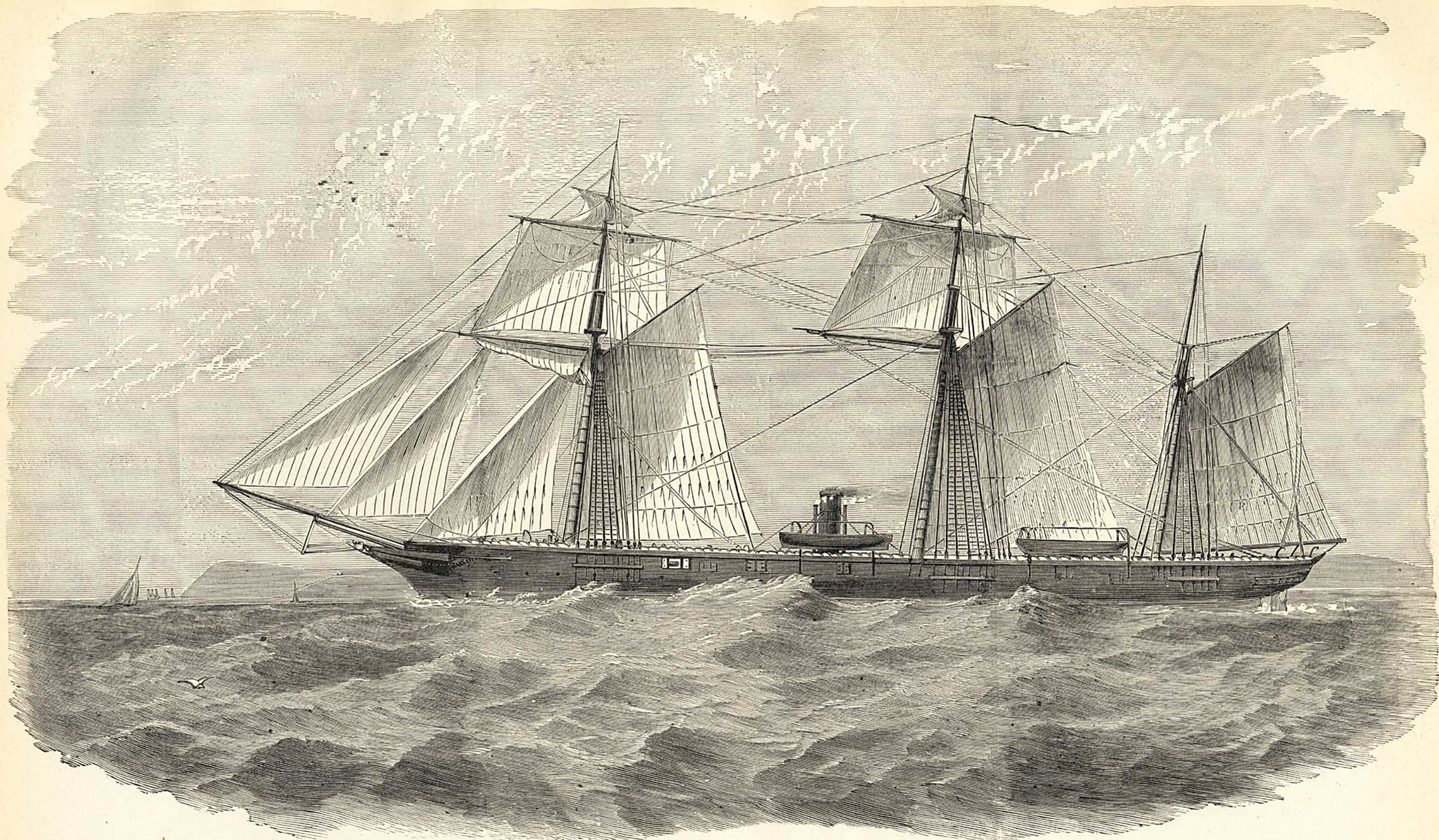




THE CONFEDERATE PRIVATEER STEAMER "ALABAMA" ("290"), CAPTAIN RAPHAEL SEMMES.—FROM A PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN AT LIVERPOOL, WHERE SHE WAS BUILT.

The "Alabama" was built in an English shipyard at Birkenhead, opposite Liverpool, for the purpose of preying upon American commerce. She slipped out of that port under false pretences, and went to the Azores, where a private English steamer brought her armament. Her commander, Semmes, was an Alabamian who had formerly been in the United States service, and her crew were nearly all English sailors. She had a remarkably successful career of destruction until she met her match in the United States cruiser "Kearsarge," commanded by John A. Winslow, which completely vanquished her and sunk her in the English channel off the harbor of Cherbourg, June 19, 1864. As the Confederates had been accorded belligerent rights it could hardly be denied that they had a right to send out privateers, but the United States Government held that in such case they should follow the universal law of privateering, and bring their captures into some port for proper adjudication. This Semmes never did; he constituted himself a court of judicature on the high seas, and burned nearly all his prizes as soon as he had taken them. For this circumstance the Government held that he was in reality a pirate, yet when the war closed he was not punished as such.