

Daily Alta California, Volume XX, Number 6715, 4 August 1868 —  
MAKING A fIOOO COMMKM KMKNT. Arrests for Arson, and Full  
ConlVuslen or One of the Parlies. [ARTICLE]

### MAKING A GOOD COMMENCEMENT.

#### Arrests for Arson, and Full Confession of One of the Parties.

Some five or six weeks since a fire occurred in the premises No. 428 Bush street, occupied by a woman known as Ida Mordaunt, and there were strong grounds for the suspicion that it was the work of the proprietress herself. Subsequent investigation showed that the woman Mordaunt was at San José when the fire occurred, and the North British and Mercantile Insurance Companies, who had insured the furniture and other contents of the place, were reluctantly compelled to settle the claim, paying the amount of the appraised loss, \$2,500. The fire was arrested by the Fire Department before the work was fully accomplished, or a much heavier amount would have been extorted. Yesterday ex-police-officer McCormick commenced his work as a special detective in the employ of the Board of Fire Underwriters, and his first move was to investigate this case. Learning that the negro servant-woman, Lizzie Phillips, *alias* Smith, who was in charge of the premises when the fire occurred, had just returned from Virginia City, he sent after her and obtained a full confession of the alleged facts concerning the operation. She told him that Miss Mordaunt offered her half the amount of the insurance to set the premises on fire, and made all preparations for the job; she then left the city, to make it impossible to connect her with the transaction. She admitted setting the place on fire, adding other details which we do not deem advisable to state here. McCormick then took her before Chief Crowley and several witnesses, in whose presence she voluntarily made a full statement, which was taken down in writing and she signed it. He then locked her up and went after Miss Mordaunt, whom he arrested on a charge of arson. The chain of evidence in this case appears to be complete, and McCormick has, at the very outset of his career in his new situation, justified the confidence shown in

him by the Committee of the Board who recommended his appointment.