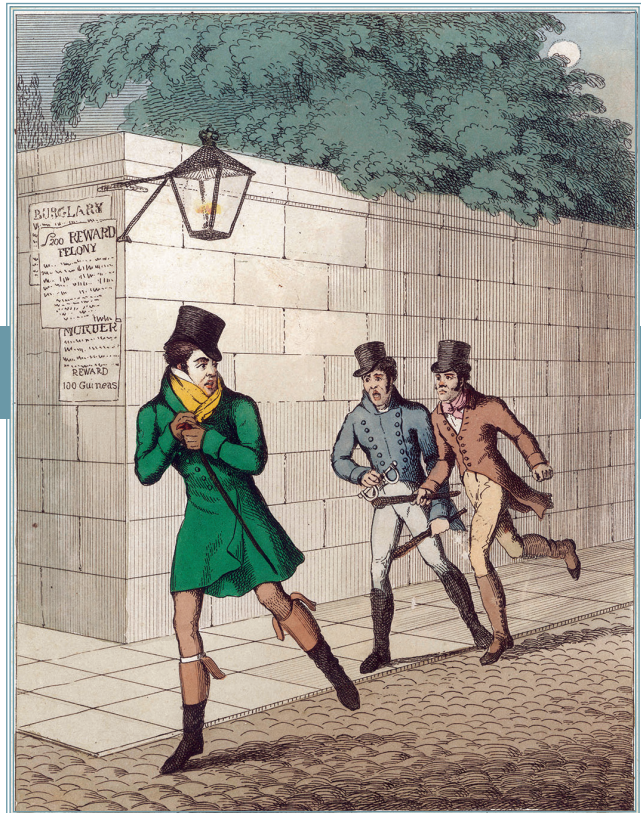Watchmen were not paid very well. As a result, some were lazy, bad at the job, or even drunk when they should be working.

Crime in the growing cities became a serious problem. Paid 'thief-takers' and law-enforcement officers, called constables, had the job of catching people accused of a crime.

1822 illustration showing two constables, armed with a wooden truncheon and set of handcuffs, chasing after a criminal

In 1800, Glasgow set up the first police force in Britain.

By the 1820s, the crime rate in London was very high. Sir Robert Peel led changes that removed watchmen and formed a paid, uniformed police force. They became known as 'peelers'.

Peeler catching a criminal