The post-mortem appearances in death from starvation are as follows: There is marked general emaciation; the skin is dry, shrivelled, and covered with a brown, bad-smelling excretion; the muscles soft, atrophied, and free from fat; the liver is small, but the gall-bladder is distended with bile. The heart, lungs, and internal organs are shrivelled and bloodless. The stomach is sometimes quite healthy; in other cases it may be collapsed, empty, and ulcerated. The intestines are also contracted, empty, and translucent.

In the absence of any disease productive of extreme emaciation (e.g., tuberculosis, stricture of œsophagus, diabetes, Addison's disease), such a state of body will furnish a strong presumption of death by starvation.

In the case of children there is not always absolute deprivation of food, but what is supplied is insufficient in quantity or of improper quality. The defence commonly set up is that the child died either of marasmus or of tuberculosis.

In cases where it is alleged that a child has been starved and ill-used, one must examine the body for signs of neglect—e.g., dirtiness of skin and hair, presence of vermin, bruises or skin eruptions. Compare its weight with a normal child of the same age and sex. If the disproportion be great and signs of neglect present, then the probability is great (provided there be no actual disease present) that the child has been starved.