

RECONCENTRATION WORKS RUIN.

Talk of a Red Cross Movement for the Destitute and Boy Soldiers.

HAVANA, via Key West, Fla., Nov. 22.—Much has been written against the edict of "Reconcentration," issued by Gen. Weyler, but it is claimed here that the result of the abolishment of that system would be to greatly intensify the sufferings of the destitute people, mostly women and children, who have been gathered together near the towns held by the Spanish troops, for nearly all the country homes and peasants' huts have been destroyed by fire, and the soil of the country has been laid bare. Under these circumstances the unfortunate people who are "reconcentrated" would have no means to shelter or feed themselves, and the thousands of peasants who are now lying idle, almost penniless and nearly famine-stricken, in or near the different towns of Cuba would be worse off even than now if the edict referred to was suddenly abolished, and these unfortunates were driven away from the towns to starve and die, in all probability more rapidly than they are doing at present. The Spanish authorities are seeking to grapple with the question to the best of their ability, and are making endeavors to give work to the "reconcentrados" who are strong enough to work, and are trying to succor those who are too weak to do anything for themselves, but it must be admitted that very little in this direction can be expected from the Spanish Government when it is remembered that the authorities are eight months in arrears in paying the soldiers who are fighting for Spain, and that they are experiencing the utmost difficulty in providing food for the men battling against the insurgents in the field.

Under the circumstances, there is only one way open to succor these destitute people, and that is to appeal to the charitable women of Cuba for aid, and to ask the International Red Cross Society to take the matter in hand. Indeed, many people have been heard to express surprise at the fact that a strong Red Cross movement was not started long ago, in Europe, at least, in behalf of the long-suffering peasantry of Cuba, to say nothing of the poor boy soldiers of Spain. But here again the pride of the Spaniards bars the way, and it is likely that the distressing state of affairs existing in Cuba will continue until some public spirited persons arise in Europe or in the United States, and make a determined effort to assist those whose only crime is that they are compelled to obey the orders of their superiors.

The Spaniards in some cases go even further than this, and take the ground that the Red Cross movement should be started in the United States, adding that, as it is from the United States that the insurgents receive their aid, so it should be from the United States that the movement in behalf of the suffering of both sides should come.