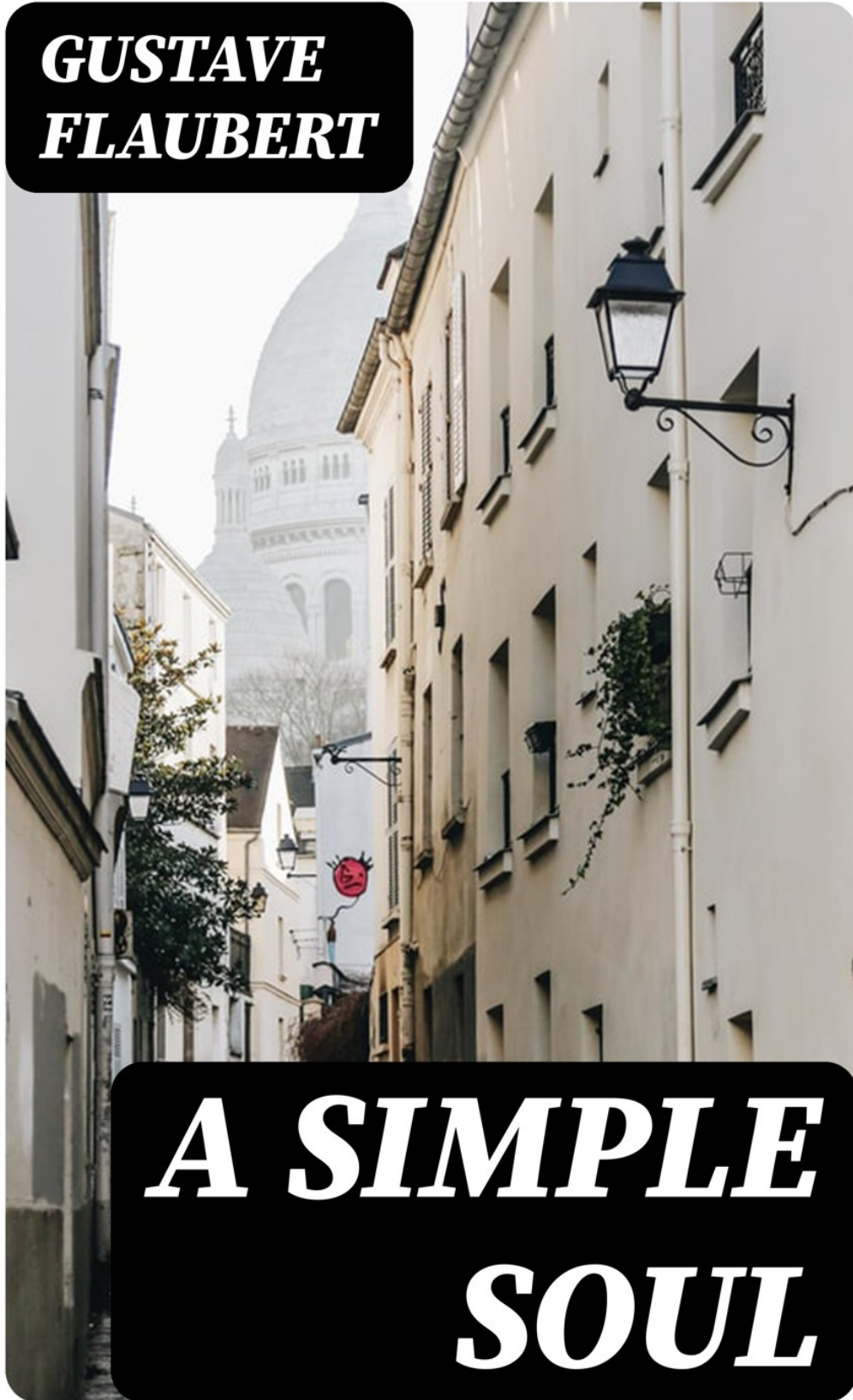


***GUSTAVE
FLAUBERT***

A photograph of a narrow Parisian street. The street is lined with tall, light-colored buildings. In the background, a large, white dome is visible, likely the dome of the Sacré-Cœur Basilica. A black street lamp is mounted on the right side of the building. A red sign with a white face is visible on the left side of the street. The sky is overcast.

***A SIMPLE
SOUL***

***GUSTAVE
FLAUBERT***



***A SIMPLE
SOUL***

Gustave Flaubert

A Simple Soul

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CHAPTER I

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For half a century the housewives of Pont-l'Évêque had envied Madame Aubain her servant Felicite.

For a hundred francs a year, she cooked and did the housework, washed, ironed, mended, harnessed the horse, fattened the poultry, made the butter and remained faithful to her mistress—although the latter was by no means an agreeable person.

Madame Aubain had married a comely youth without any money, who died in the beginning of 1809, leaving her with two young children and a number of debts. She sold all her property excepting the farm of Toucques and the farm of Geffosses, the income of which barely amounted to 5,000 francs; then she left her house in Saint-Melaine, and moved into a less pretentious one which had belonged to her ancestors and stood back of the market-place. This house, with its slate-covered roof, was built between a passage-way and a narrow street that led to the river. The interior was so unevenly graded that it caused people to stumble. A narrow hall separated the kitchen from the parlour, where Madame Aubain sat all day in a straw armchair near the window. Eight mahogany chairs stood in a row against the white wainscoting. An old piano, standing beneath a barometer, was covered with a pyramid of old books and boxes. On either side of the yellow marble mantelpiece, in Louis XV. style, stood a tapestry armchair. The clock represented a temple of Vesta; and the whole room smelled musty, as it was on a lower level than the garden.