

# Red Riding-Hood



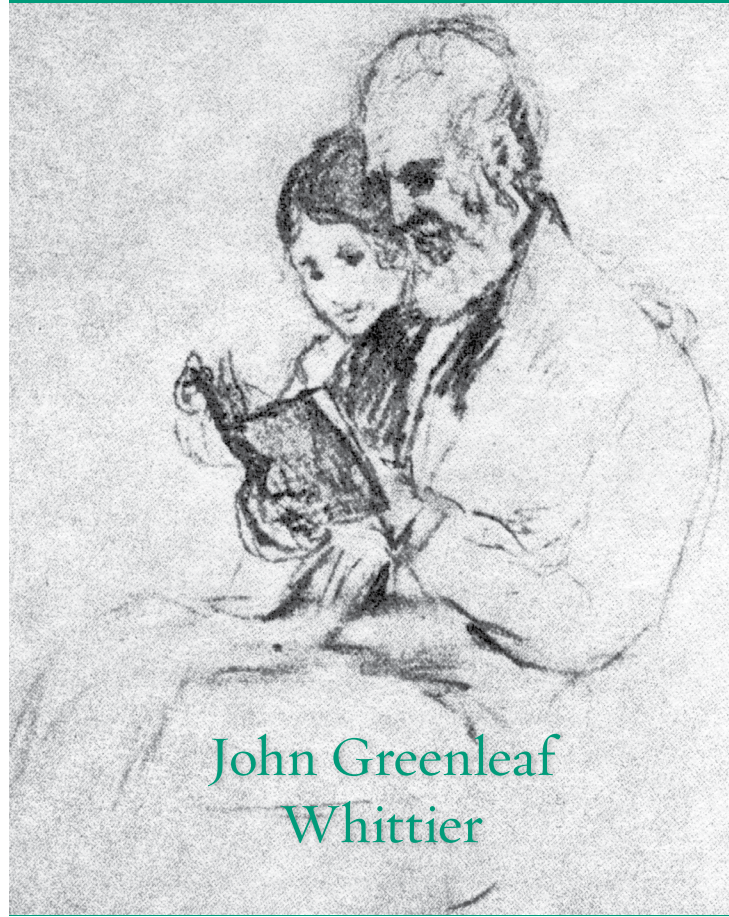
## WHITTIER BIRTHPLACE

305 Whittier Road • Haverhill, MA 01830-1738



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John Greenleaf  
Whittier

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On the wide lawn the snow lay deep,  
Ridged o'er with many a drifted heap;  
The wind that through the pine-trees sung  
The naked elm-boughs tossed and swung;  
While, through the window, frosty-starred,  
Against the sunset purple barred,  
We saw the sombre crow flap by,  
The hawk's gray fleck along the sky,  
The crested blue-jay flitting swift,  
The squirrel poisoning on the drift,  
Erect, alert, his broad gray tail  
Set to the north wind like a sail.

It came to pass, our little lass,  
With flattened face against the glass,  
And eyes in which the tender dew  
Of pity shone, stood gazing through  
The narrow space her rosy lips  
Had melted from the frost's eclipse:  
"Oh, see," she cried, "the poor blue-jays!  
What is it that the black crow says?  
The squirrel lifts his little legs  
Because he has no hands, and begs;  
He's asking for my nuts, I know:  
May I not feed them on the snow?"

Half lost within her boots, her head Warm-  
sheltered in her hood of red,  
Her plaid skirt close about her drawn,  
She floundered down the wintry lawn;  
Now struggling through the misty veil  
Blown round her by the shrieking gale;  
Now sinking in a drift so low  
Her scarlet hood could scarcely show  
Its dash of color on the snow.  
She dropped for bird and beast forlorn  
Her little store of nuts and corn,

And thus her timid guests bespoke:  
"Come, squirrel, from your hollow oaky-  
Come, black old crow, —come, poor blue-jay,  
Before your supper's blown away!  
Don't be afraid, we all are good;  
And I'm mamma's Red Riding-Hood!"  
O Thou whose care is over all,  
Who heedest even the sparrow's fall,  
Keep in the little maiden's breast  
The pity which is now its guest!  
Let her not cultured years make less  
The childhood charm of tenderness,  
But let her feel as well as know,  
Nor harder with her polish grow!  
Unmoved by sentimental grief  
That wails along some printed leaf,  
But prompt with kindly word and deed  
To own the claims of all who need,  
Let the grown woman's self make good  
The promise of Red Riding-Hood!

—John Greenleaf Whittier.

*The sketch on the cover of Phoebe Woodman and John Greenleaf Whittier was done from life by William B. Closson. Phoebe was the adopted daughter of one of the three cousins with whom Whittier lived at Oak Knoll for part of his final sixteen years.*

*The red riding-hood may be seen today at Whittier Birthplace in Haverhill.*