**CHILDHOOD MEMORIES**

**Understanding the Text**

1. **Fill in the blanks:**

Rabindranath Tagore’s father often **travelled** and brought **home** foreign servants. As a child **Rabindranath Tagore** enjoyed meeting these foreigners. One day it was proposed that Tagore should accompany his father to a trip to the **Himalayas**. They went by train to **Bolpur** first. Here, Tagore spent his time wandering about gathering stones of various shapes. Next they stopped at **Allahabad and Cawnpore**. Their next stop was **Amritsar**, where they stayed for **a month**. In April they left for **Dalhousie**. In Dalhousie they lived at **Bakrota**, on the highest hilltop.

1. **Answer these questions:**
2. **Describe the foreigners that Rabindranath Tagore met at home.**

**Ans**: They had a young Punjabi servant named Lenu, who was received cordially. Some of the other foreigners were Gabriel, the Jew who sold scented oils and wore an embroidered gabardine, and the Kabulis who wore dusty, baggy trousers and carried knapsacks and bundles.

1. **Why was Rabindranath Tagore disappointed when the train started?**

**Ans**: Tagore’s cousin, Satya, had told him that getting into a railway carriage was a dangerous affair—the least slip, and it was all over. Then one had to hold on to his seat with all his might, otherwise the jolt was so tremendous that one could get thrown off. Therefore, when they got to the station, he was nervous. But when they got into their compartment easily, he felt the worst was yet to come. When they made a smooth start without any adventure, Tagore felt disappointed.

1. **What did Rabindranath Tagore’s father ask him to decorate? How was he to decorate it?**

**Ans**: Rabindranath Tagore’s father used to sit for his morning prayer on a small hillock of piled-up earth. This was the hill he was asked to decorate. He was to decorate it with the smooth pebbles that he gathered from the sandy soils of the ravine.

1. **Find a sentence in the text that tells us that Rabindranath Tagore’s father**  
   **a. prayed every morning.  
   b. allowed Rabindranath Tagore to be free.  
   c. encouraged and appreciated Rabindranath Tagore.**

**Ans**: The sentences are:   
a. On top of this height, my father used to sit for his morning prayer, and as he sat, the sun would rise at the edge of the undulating expanse which stretched away in front of him.  
b. Though I was a mere child, my father did not place any restriction on my wandering.  
c. He never made light of my labours. On the contrary, he waxed enthusiastic.

1. **How did Rabindranath Tagore and his father spend time in Amritsar?**

**Ans**: Tagore and his father went to the Golden Temple of Amritsar, the place of worship of the Sikhs in the middle of a lake. There, the sacred chanting resounded continually. His father, seated amidst the throng of worshippers, would sometimes add his voice to the hymn of praise, joining in their devotions. The worshippers would wax enthusiastically cordial, and they would return loaded with the sanctified offerings of sugar crystals and sweets.

1. **Answer these questions with reference to the context:**
2. ***The broad fields with their blue-green border trees, and the villages nestling in their shade flew past in a stream of pictures which melted away like a flood of mirages.***  
   **a. Who saw these pictures?  
   b. Where did he see them?  
   c. Why did they melt away like a flood of mirages?**

**Ans**:

a. Rabindranath Tagore saw these pictures.  
b. He saw them through the window of the train as they went to Bolpur.  
c. The speed of the train made them disappear very quickly and it seemed as if they had never been there.

1. ***‘How wonderful!’ he exclaimed. ‘Wherever did you get all these?’***  
   **a. Who said this to whom?  
   b. What had he got?  
   c. What did the speaker suggest he do with them?**

**Ans**:

a. Tagore’s father said this to the young Tagore.  
b. He had got many curious, smooth pebbles from the sandy soils of the ravine.  
c. He suggested that Rabindranath Tagore use them to decorate the small hillock of piled-up earth in the garden.

1. ***And yet this boy of only the other day was crawling about their trunks unchallenged.***  
   **a. Who was the boy?  
   b. Explain the phrase ‘boy of only the other day’.  
   c. Where was he crawling about?**

**Ans**:

a. Rabindranath Tagore was the boy.  
b. He was young and the trees among which he was walking about were centuries old. Therefore he says he is very small and insignificant in front of them.  
c. He would wander about in the forest from one peak to another.