

It doesn't take much to amuse me. And, it is a fact of daily life that there are so many little incidents that cause momentary chuckles. One of these occurrences took place this morning.

We were in the barn for morning milking. I had just sat down to milk out half of Effie's udder before I let out her calf. As usual, Butter, the barn cat, was sitting by me. He stretched up his paws, clawed the leg of my jeans to complete his stretch, and settled back down. He was content and sat there purring, waiting for the milk I would pour into his dish after I finished milking Effie.

Then came a wrinkle in the proceedings. It arrived in the form of the birds that came strolling by. We have five Royal Palm turkeys. They are beautiful birds, their white plumage speckled with a pattern of black. There are two toms and three hens, and all of them are extremely curious and also friendly.

When the turkeys spotted me sitting by Effie, they strolled up. That was no problem, but, then, the largest tom came even closer. I don't know if he heard the milk hitting the stainless steel milk pail and was curious about the noise or if he may have seen his own image in the shiny pail, but, for some reason, he moved up right next to me. I didn't want him sticking his head into the pail, but before I could shoo him away, Butter the cat reached out and swatted that turkey, hard, on the face. All five hurried away, and Butter sat back down and washed his paws.

I have seen him chase the turkeys on other occasions, and he occasionally herds the hens out of his way, too. He never showed any signs of attempting to prey on the birds, even when they were little. He must sense that there is no legal season on domestic fowl! But, he does not like them, and he is not shy about letting them know.

Those turkeys, though, provide a laugh almost every day. They followed me down our long lane to the mailbox one day, and a car was coming down the road, so I had to wait until it had passed to cross over to the mailbox. I was afraid that the turkeys would be hard on my heels and would be hit by the car.

We have noticed that they also try to follow the tractor or the

pickup, too. So far, they retreat when they are about half way down the lane, but we keep our eyes open. They show up in our yard often, too, and sometimes, I have that feeling that someone is looking at me. I turn toward the window, and there they are, on the porch, looking in.

One of these birds was supposed to become a Thanksgiving turkey, but their flying ability does not seem to have been diminished much yet, so I suspect they are not reaching maturity any time soon. They may be destined to lives as mascots here on Coe Creek.