

II.2.c.  
Usable  
inventions

in the development of this printing revolution but the key person was Gutenberg and his presses soon produced Bibles and other literature in abundance. (He did not get much for his efforts--other than satisfaction--printers do not make much money, you see.) Movable type is not a "fast form" of printing but it allows the same letters to be used over and over rather than having to hand cut a page into a wooden block, etc. Ultimately the invention of printing would lead to an increase in the reading skill and literacy would blossom. This represented a strong blow against superstition.

--Gunpowder

Although the Chinese had used it for years in displays and Bacon had made children's toys featuring small explosions, gunpowder was only slowly brought to military significance. When it did come to that point it was a lethal stroke against feudalism. While the feudal system did not perish overnight, it did die as the iron-clad knights and the heavy walled castles were not adequate protection against ball and powder. Fortresses would continue to be important but they were no longer impregnable and a castle on a high hill overlooking the countryside...became a very inviting target.

Agricultural developments

Improvement in agricultural skills followed the invention of such minute things as the horseshoe nail. These hurried the processes of meeting life-necessities and so allowed more time for invention, study, etc. Horseshoes had been around since before the Roman time but the practicality of putting them on horses in a useful way had been a problem. The sudden harnessing of the horses made the challenge of crop production much smaller --the horse was a much better worker than the ox--and the shift to the more mobile methods was comparable to the shift from the horse to the tractor of more modern times. When a segment of the population is released from continual duties in meeting the needs of life, more time is allotted for delving into life mysteries, etc.

Social improvements

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The failure of the feudal system led to a number of these items: