About the Vanity Fair Caricatures

The magazine Vanity Fair was founded in 1868 by Thomas Gibson Bowles who was both owner and editor. The title was presumably borrowed from Thackery's famous novel (1847/8).

The first edition of the magazine (7th November 1868) did not contain any caricatures, but the next issue of 3rd January 1869 contained a full page caricature of Benjamin Disraeli- the first of some 2,300 which would be published by Vanity Fair. A mixture of well-known society characters, the latest techniques of colour lithography and Bowles amusing accompanying text, proved a winning combination and the caricatures continued until January 1914. The most prolific artist was (Sir) Leslie Ward ('Spy') who created 1,325 of the total.