Term: Retroduction

Quote: ... the second figure reads:

Anything of the nature of M would have the character \{p\}, taken haphazard, S has the character \{p\};
\[\therefore\text{ Provisionally, we may suppose S to be of the nature of M.}\]

Still more convenient is the following conditional form of statement:

If \{m\} were true, \{p\}, \{p\}', \{p\}” would follow as miscellaneous consequences

But \{p\}, \{p\}', \{p\}” are in fact true;
\[\therefore\text{ Provisionally, we may suppose that \{m\} is true.}\]

This kind of reasoning is very often called adopting a hypothesis for the sake of its explanation of known facts.


References: RLT 140
Date of Quote: 1898