Term: Retroduction

Quote:

... the second figure reads:

Anything of the nature of M would have the character \( p \), taken haphazard, 
S has the character \( p \);
\( \therefore \) 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 
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But \{p\}, \{p\}', \{p\}'' are in fact true; 
\( \therefore \) 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