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.

Source: Peirce, C. S. (1898). Cambridge Lectures on Reasoning and the Logic of Things: 
Types of Reasoning. MS [R] 441.

References: RLT 140

Date of Quote: 1898