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;
\[ \therefore \text{ Provisionally, we may suppose that } \{m\} \text{ is true.} \]

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